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STUDIES ON PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

By WILLIAM KNIGHT

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

STATESMAN AND PHILOSOPHER

THESE *NUGÆ*

ARE

DEDICATED

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PREFACE

What is contained in this volume was spoken, in the first instance, to students of Philosophy at St Andrews.

It has been my custom to begin the work of each session at the University by an address on a topic detached from, and yet related to, the course of lectures which followed. The introductory one, while dealing with matters of permanent interest, has also borne upon a question of the hour. A selection of twelve is now published, as a humble addition to the work which my predecessors have done, in the direction and enlargement of philosophical studies at St Andrews. I well know what the greatest of them—Chalmers, Ferrier, and Flint—accomplished; and that I cannot add to it except in a secondary way. A few of the lectures of Chalmers, and many of those by Ferrier, have been published; while much of Professor Flint's work at St Andrews is embodied in his Philosophy of History.

The ordinary class-lectures delivered by teachers of Philosophy in Scotland, however, have not usually

been published in full. Except in the cases of Thomas Reid at Aberdeen and Glasgow—and of Dugald Stewart, Thomas Brown, and Sir William Hamilton at Edinburgh—the outside world has not had a complete course of University lectures on Philosophy presented to it in book-form. This has been wise, for an obvious reason. What has been used in oral teaching, on the vast subjects of Logic Psychology Ethics and Metaphysics, has to be entirely re-cast, and re-adjusted, for publication in a volume; and the appearance of new treatises, the continuance of discussion, and the rise of fresh discoveries, have necessitated writing "up to date" in recent years, within the department of Philosophy, in a way unknown before.

In addition to this, it should be remembered that a large part of the teaching done by means of lectures in our University class-rooms is a preparation for the Scottish academical degree. It is therefore not designed *ab initio* for the wider public of readers and students of Philosophy.

Portions of the following essays and addresses have appeared, although in a different form, in several of the Magazines of the day; *e.g.* in *Mind*, in the *International Journal of Ethics*, and in some College *Reviews* and University *Records* in this country and America. Others have not been published in any form. Many of my introductory lectures, given at St Andrews but not included

in this volume, have appeared in *The Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary*, the *Fortnightly*, etc., and in *Essays on Philosophy, Old and New.*

It is somewhat late in the day for any one to offer a new "System of Thought" to the world; and any offered now would only be an old one, "writ larger" or "smaller," as the case might be. Nevertheless each of the great historic systems of human thought must, from generation to generation, be re-set, re-cast, and re-interpreted in numerous ways.

Although primarily addressed to University men and women, no one will suppose that these fugitive utterances cover the whole extent of the problems discussed.

The ground gone over in some of the essays has been slightly re-traversed in others from a fresh point of view; but each discussion, as now published, has been either expanded or contracted since it was originally written.

The volume is more especially addressed to those who wish an introduction to Philosophy.* It may be of some use to persons interested in its perennial problems, who do not intend to enter a University, as well as to those who mean to become academic students; and while only advanced investigators, or original contributors, will care for

* My own *Introduction to Philosophy* will be subsequently published by Mr Murray, as one of the "University Extension Manuals."

new Systems or Treatises, a way may be prepared for an appreciation of the work to be done by the specialists and experts of the future, through a perusal of what is now given to beginners, who wish to know what Philosophy is, and what it can do for all of us. W. K.

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I

THE FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE PRESENT TIME

Before this subject can be discussed with any profit, we must have a true idea of the nature of Philosophy itself; not a complete idea of it, but one that is approximately correct, and valid as a preliminary to the discussion of its functions. The latter, in fact, arise out of the former; and, since the use of a thing is almost self-evident when its nature is understood, in unfolding the characteristics of Philosophy, we at the same time define its functions.

To begin with, various misconceptions as to its real nature may be dealt with. By some it is supposed to be a region of intellectual haze; a misty territory, where one will be inevitably lost if he wanders far. By others it is regarded as a sphere of crotchets and intellectual vagaries; a quagmire, in which will-o'-the-wisps are everywhere to be seen; in other words, as a realm of dreams and fancies.

Again, it is supposed to be a mere arena for intellectual athletics, useful only for training people

to excel in mental combats. Sometimes it is looked upon as a pastime or luxury, for the few who have leisure to carry out archæological research, but with no universal or world-wide significance. In other quarters—by those whose convictions are traditional, and who think that enquiring into the bases of belief may possibly end in its destruction—it is supposed to be a dangerous territory to enter, where one may become irreverent, if not sacrilegious. Doubt, or suspense of mind—that earnest honest doubt which, in striving to conquer itself, has given rise to Philosophy—is misconstrued, as the prologue to indifference, or as incentive to unbelief of every sort. And so it comes to this that while Philosophy is as old as the origin of man, or at least of civilised humanity, and as universal as are the races that inhabit our globe, there have been many in every country who have regarded it as dangerous, in so far as its cultivation has disturbed the *status quo*, and led to "new departures" generally.

There are other popular objections to Philosophy current in our time, but all that are worth considering may be summarised under the two misconceptions of its unreliability and its danger; in other words, the impossibility of reaching definite and trustworthy conclusions in a sphere over which mists continually brood, and the risks that are run—and must be run—by all who study it.

In answer to these irrelevant and prejudiced objections, I think it may be said that, so soon as

one begins to think and to wonder—to wonder, and again to think—the problem of what Knowledge is, and curiosity as to what Belief and Certainty are, inevitably arise; and that is the rise of Philosophy.

A distinguished modern thinker, and poet, once said, "In wonder all Philosophy is born, and in wonder all it ends; while admiration fills up the interspaces." And what Coleridge emphasized, in that happy sentence, Plato and Aristotle had said before him, more than two thousand years ago. The fact is that so soon as we ask the meaning of anything that exists, or the reason for our believing this or that to be true—so soon as we enquire into the evidence of what is set before us, or try to discover the basis on which Authority rests—we begin to philosophise.

And why? Simply because we scrutinize. We endeavour to understand tradition, by examining the causes, the reasons, and the sources of things. We have reached that stage, in mental development, at which we desire to escape from the passive reception of ideas, inherited by us *ab ante*, or thrust upon us *ab extra;* and, instead of doing so, to adopt our opinions, and hold our convictions, on valid evidence, which is both rational and verifiable.

We are born into a world of external influence, which dominates over us, whether we will or no; and, in infancy and youth, this world is met and dealt with by us, in very different ways. We

begin the journey of life with an intellectual outfit, not only meagre, but which may be described as *nil.* As Robert Browning put it, in *Bishop Blougram's Apology:*

> We mortals cross the ocean of this world
> Each in his average cabin of a life,
> The best's not big, the worst yields elbow-room.

The fact is we start from a zero-point of absolute nescience. Whether we arrived on this planet from a sphere beyond it, and are only for a time incarnated in flesh, or started in it *de novo*, it is certain that we began experience in the world not merely ignorant, but as regards sense-experience blind, and deaf, and dumb. It was only by slow degrees that those senses — which are our normal gateways of communication with the outer world — were developed. In other words, we commenced our mundane journey in fetters, *most useful fetters;* nevertheless tied, and manacled to sense. I believe that our earliest ideas reached us not from the external world, but from a remoter realm, out of which we emerged, and into which we at length re-merge. Nevertheless, at our entrance into the present sphere of sense, from which we are taking numerous outlooks into the ideal realm which surrounds and enfolds it, we were (each of us) only a germ of possible fulfilment. We started on our journey unequipped, save with the possibilities of achievement. And so, when we began it, we were inevitably the victims of

illusion, as well as the heirs of all the knowledge of our ancestors, and the inheritors of what they have consciously or unconsciously bequeathed to us.

Then, as soon as we were able to do so, we picked up this or that bit of information. We got to know various facts, in reference to the world and ourselves, in isolation; that is to say, we apprehended a number of truths detached from one another. We gathered our knowledge piecemeal. It is the process by which we all proceed, as a rule. We pick up what we can get, from this province and from that. But by degrees, a stage is reached when we discover that the knowledge of facts is fragmentary knowledge. Whenever we see that a mere acquaintance with details has no unity and coherence in it, we become tired of merely collecting facts; and wish, if possible, to get some knowledge of the laws which explain the facts, and of the principles which comprehend them.

And here it is—*i.e.* when this stage is reached—that Philosophy arises. It is born for each human being whenever he becomes dissatisfied with the mere accumulation of facts in detail, however interesting each may be; when he is tired of miscellaneous or scattered information, however fascinating it may have become; and when he wishes to obtain some idea of the Universe as a whole; *i.e.* when he desires to know the *One*, rather than the *many*. This is, at the same time, a desire to get to the fundamental root, or underlying principle, of knowledge and experience.

Whenever we realize that we have been living on the surface of things, and have been content to do so—a state or condition which was quite natural for a time, child-like and even beautiful while it lasted—and whenever the longing for a knowledge of *arcana* springs up, at that moment Philosophy emerges. It arises, spontaneously and naturally, in every unsophisticated being, so soon as enquiry into the foundations of belief begins. It is *a hunger and thirst for reality*, for all that is verifiably true, beyond the illusions of our early experience; and thus, it is the natural sequel or corollary to a knowledge of the facts and the laws of the world, whether these are inductively or deductively acquired. More especially, as it endeavours to rise to the primal Source—which comprehends all that has emanated from it—it is a quest for unity, and for repose in the "last clear elements of things."

On the other hand, the immense vistas opened up by the Sciences of the nineteenth century, and the "sure and certain" knowledge acquired in each of them, has led many to think that we should content ourselves with what is fragmentary, and reaches us in sections; especially when we find that our powers of acquisition are extremely limited. It is said that the wisest, and the most modest, thing to do is to give up aerial flights and aspirations, and to travel slowly along the lower lines of experiential evidence. These will yield us, at least, the sober lessons of worldly wisdom, and they will prevent us

from being quixotic day-dreamers. If we cannot find the great "secret of the world," the philosophic quest for it—teaching us the limits of our faculties—may at least be of use in helping us to acquiesce.

But then, so soon as we begin to enquire what is it—in this multitudinous assortment of statistics, this long array of discovered laws—that we really do know? and what is it that we have reached? so soon as we ask, what is the relation of the knower to the known? we find that we must either rise above the whole series, or penetrate to its remotest depths. The mere sequence of phenomena, and those generalizations from them which we call Laws of Nature, are of little use, unless we can see the inner affinity of each element in the cosmos with every other, and unless we can contemplate the whole—as Spinoza put it—*sub specie æternitatis*, *i.e.* unless we can escape from the particular to the General, from the relative to the Absolute, from the finite to the Infinite.

Nay more, we find that the two spheres—the one within, the other without — are both illusive, unless each is contemplated in relation to the other. We cannot understand either of them, unless we take into account what is supposed to be its converse, but is really its ally, and counterpart. Philosophy asserts that the Infinite and finite are known in correlation, just as all other antitheses are known. It maintains that the finite and the Infinite, the relative and the Absolute (just like the part and the whole), are not fundamentally

opposed, any more than mind and matter are absolutely antithetic. It asks why should the finite and the Infinite present such a tremendous intellectual chasm that they cannot be *known simultaneously* and that there can be no *comings and goings* between them? It asks, does not the one yield us a point of immediate departure towards the other? And it replies in the affirmative, simply because they are corollaries, and because the knowledge of the two is reciprocal? In knowing anything of the finite, our foot is on the first rung of the ladder which leads us to the Infinite; and, unless the finite gives us such a ladder of ascent, it is a mere congeries of atoms discordant each from each. In other words, it affirms that we can find the Infinite within the finite, the Absolute within the relative, and the Divine within the human; just as we find the One within the many, and the Ideal within the real and the actual.

In this longing to escape from the miscellaneousness of information to the realm of orderly conviction, or from the manifold to the One, we have a true explanation of the origin of Philosophy. But there is much more to be said, in explanation of it.

So soon as we begin the acquisition of knowledge, in its various sections and compartments—devoting ourselves to each of them separately for a time—we find that, from our relation to the world of sense, and from the fact that we ourselves are soul and body combined, we express all our

knowledge of each of these realms in terms of the other. That is to say, we speak of external Nature in language derived from our inner consciousness; and we describe that consciousness in terms derived from external Nature. In other words, *we think in pictures;* and express our knowledge metaphorically, or allegorically. We discover that, because we ourselves are dual,—soul and body combined,—all human speech is a record of the process of defining things by means of their opposites.

So soon as this is understood, that is to say, so soon as we see that *Language is a mosaic*, in which everything is described by its contrary, and that our most exact speech is full of subtle instances of this reciprocity of terms—while we are all captive in the bondage it involves—the wish to escape from such thraldom is a very natural desire. But we cannot escape from it. The fetter is a continuous one. It encompasses us from our birth till our death; and it is bound upon us, as already said, in virtue of our being body and soul combined together in one. Nevertheless, in the desire to understand this peculiarity of our nature, to find out why it is that we think in pictures, and speak through metaphors—why it is that we interpret the two realms of Sense and Thought each in terms of the other—in that Philosophy arises, and in that it lives, and has its being. We gradually come to see that, while we *must* think by the aid of pictures, and express our thought allegorically or metaphori-

cally, never to get beyond such representations of reality, is to proceed lamely, or supported by crutches; instead of walking straight and erect, along the highway of knowledge.

No greater service can be rendered by Philosophy to the zealous, patient, successful workers in other fields of labour, than the humble suggestion that every one should ask himself, "What is the real meaning of this or that term? the ultimate significance of this or that phrase? of which I have hitherto been making use, without any scrutiny or cross-examination of their contents?"

Another characteristic of Philosophy which gives special significance to its many functions, may be stated thus. We come into this world inheriting vast traditions—traditions which include many truths and many errors—these being intertwisted variously. At first, and quite rightly, we are satisfied with tradition. It rules us from our birth, and from the very urns of the past. But a time comes when we must ask, "What is the meaning of this mass of inherited opinion, of these many-sided convictions, and of this traditional belief which environs and hems us in? Why should it control and guide us?" Now, in that enquiry into the meaning of tradition, and in the desire to escape from it—either as directly imposed upon us, or as indirectly enfolding and compelling us to act—Philosophy, and the philosophic spirit, come to life within us.

It does not follow that, when this desire or

longing arises, we must discard our inherited traditions or ignore them. The beliefs in which we have been educated may be re-adopted by us in their full integrity, or they may be set aside in part, or entirely abandoned. But, in any case, they must all be *scrutinized.* They must be discussed and re-discussed, tested and re-tested, until their inherent evidence finally appears.

In previous paragraphs the nature of Philosophy has been indicated in a general way; and, while it is with its functions and uses that we are now especially concerned, the discussion of its nature may explain its function so far. In what follows, its uses will be more definitely dealt with. Some of these change from time to time, others are everlasting. I think that the permanent ones may be defined as follows. Philosophy is needed at all times, first, as *the dispassionate critic of antagonistic systems of thought;* secondly, as *the arbiter and adjudicator between rival claimants in the realm of knowledge;* thirdly, as *the reconciler of things and systems apparently, but not really, opposed;* and therefore, fourthly, as *a guide to all specialists,* conducting them to unity in the midst of diversity; and, as an intellectual lamp which will enable them to see the One within the many.

1. As the critic of antagonistic systems, it need only be pointed out that the supreme function of Philosophy is to penetrate to the root of each one of them, to discover its origin, and impartially to

weigh the evidence in its favour or against it. By thus trying to understand the source of every system, it endeavours to explain not only its origin, but also its subsequent development, and to account for its present position. It shows, to quote familiar words, "the rock out of which it has been hewn, and the pit out of which it has been dug."

Thus, a study of History comes to the aid of Philosophy, and the history of Philosophy explains in the most noteworthy manner, the sequence of ideas in the great Systems of the world. None of these is intelligible, or can be adequately criticised, apart from that which originated it, and that to which it subsequently gave rise. All of them—even those great ones which come down to us with the sanction of the ages, and the prestige of time—are an evolution out of earlier elements. They are the product of manifold influences, which have moulded them into the shape in which they now exist.

2. Next, as an arbiter and adjudicator between rival claimants in the sphere of knowledge and belief, the function of Philosophy is supreme; and it acts in this way. Having explained how each system has emerged—its earlier function—it next endeavours (or should endeavour) to mitigate the fierceness of the quarrels which have arisen between their respective champions. It should restrain their animosities, by adjusting their differences. As in the case of great international disputes, where diplomacy is needed to prevent the more dreadful

"arbitrament of war," Philosophy intervenes to shew diplomatically that—in almost all disputes—there was truth on both sides of the question at issue, and therefore that neither combatant had a monopoly of justice.

And here, its use as an arbiter in questions outside its own domain may be indicated. Take those problems which constantly crop up in political and social life, or in our current controversies on Literature and Art; or, again, the questions which occur in theological and religious debate. The function of Philosophy is to shew to all combatants that while they may usually be "right in what they affirm," they are for the most part "wrong in what they deny"; and that their chief error has lain in not making allowance for antagonistic forms of thought, and for rival theoretic schemes of this mysterious Universe in which we live and work.

It has happened over and over again that the leaders, or champions, of intellectual systems—so soon as they come to the front, and are honoured by the homage of a large following—assume an arrogant air, and endeavour to run down opponents. In other words, they try to bring about a dead level of uniformity in the realm of knowledge. Now, here it is that the function of Philosophy comes in, *to vindicate the rights of minorities, and to raise up down-trodden reputations*, if there is anything to justify them in their ancestry.

Serenely impartial, and sitting as a judge in the

realm of knowledge, Philosophy has a noble part to play, simply in adjusting rival claims. It looks before and after. It is not indifferent to the turmoil of present controversy, but it knows that "the thing which hath been, it is that which shall be, and there is nothing new under the sun." When genuine, Philosophy is never carried away by the fashion of the hour. It sees as much in the opinions of the past as in those of the present day, and it also believes that there will be new truth in doctrines not yet formulated; while it rigorously scrutinizes all that happens to be meanwhile in the ascendant.

3. The third function of Philosophy is closely kindred to the second; although it differs from it, and is an addition to it. It is that of being a reconciler of things opposed. Its noblest office is to say to the thousand combatants in rival intellectual camps, and territories of social estrangement, "Put up your swords into their sheaths, for ye are brethren." It asks, "Why waste your time and strength in assaulting one another, in minimising the good which each of you achieve, and in misconstruing the results to which each of you attain?" It says, "Let warfare cease throughout the whole realm of Knowledge. Let it only be carried on against ignorance and error, unreality and fraud."

But to come to particulars. Suppose that rival sects are not only in arms against each other—antagonists on the immemorial battlefields of belief—but that, within the speculative camp itself, the

two great parties into which philosophers have been divided throughout all time, viz. the Realists and the Idealists, are at war. The leaders and representative partisans of each school proceed to write ingenious books, and brilliant papers in "International Journals," in defence of their own speciality. Intellectual combats—as exciting as the political tournaments between Conservatives and Liberals —are industriously carried on. There is prolonged incisive controversy, and brilliant meetings of opposing forces, within the arena of debate; until at last Philosophy itself comes in, behind these rival disputants. It suggests that each antagonist in the intellectual warfare of the world has had some reason on his side; and also that, because each *once* flourished, it will flourish again, vindicating itself against attack; and that it will compensate for its temporary absence by assuming new aspects when it rises again from the dead.

It has been already said that one great function of Philosophy is to shew to rival disputants and claimants—in whatsoever field they work—that their adversaries are as good as themselves; because nothing, worthy of their own energy in combating it, could ever have emerged in the world's history, unless it had a real foothold in human nature, and was as worthy of continued existence as the doctrine which the partisan espouses. Thus, while Philosophy is the enemy—may I make use of an Irish bull, and call it the peaceful enemy?—of all faddists, doctrinaires, and vendors of universal

specifics for mankind, its noblest function is to reconcile every possible opposing system in a larger and a world-wide unity.

But the "reconciliation" referred to in this third function of Philosophy is not to be effected by milk-and-water compromises, or by such effusive common-places about unity as that "You are right, and I am right, and all are right!" The only reconciliation and adjustment that is of permanent use is one which brings out into clear prominence, and articulate statement, the elements of truth in each of the systems thus philosophically dealt with. Philosophy knows that intellectual differences *must* remain to the end of the last chapter of human history; and that they may probably increase in number in days to come, while our controversies accentuate themselves with the lapse of time. But it hopes to find—underlying future debate—a far larger recognition of the truth taught by opponents, and of the legitimacy and permanent value of systems that are nevertheless diametrically opposed.

Great, therefore, as is the service which Philosophy renders in exposing impostors of all sorts, and the advertisers of specifics in the realm of belief—which are nearly as bad as those issued by the vendors of medicine for the body—a still higher function is discharged, *when its analysis gives place to a subsequent synthesis.* When it becomes constructive, and proves by the light it throws on all problems, that (as Bossuet put it) "every error is a truth abused,"—that heresy is mere exaggeration,

and that an opponent should first try to discover the root of truth whence the system he opposes has sprung—its service to mankind is the highest possible. To harmonize and unify is a far higher aim, and its realization is a much loftier achievement, than to analyse and to disintegrate.

If the study of Philosophy—a knowledge of its problems, and a course of discipline undergone by means of it—enables one to pronounce a sane verdict on pretentious claimants in other departments, who would try to win people over to this intellectual fad or that irrelevant practice, it cannot be regarded as a trivial pursuit. If one is saved by means of it from belief in universal specifics, if one is made a doubter full of reverence, or a modest questioner of ancient beliefs—acquiescent, and yet hopeful in his out-look—he may surely be thankful for the result.

But it is a greater and better result if one learns —by means of it—to see fragments of truth in what has hitherto been construed as error, and some error, in what has been supposed to be truth. And why ? because there is thereby discovered *a way of reconciling opposites.* There can be no doubt that the rivalries of sects and parties, in the State and in the Church, as well as of cliques and coteries in social life, will go on. They may even be increased and accentuated as time advances, because with the advance of civilization so many new elements will arise, which must cause temporary friction misunderstanding and perplexity, and which may even

end in positive recoil. Still the function of Philosophy will remain, viz. to indicate, and to vindicate, the truth and value which exists in every one of these apparently alien developments.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that many of the leaders of opposite schools and parties have admitted—at the close of their life-work, if not in the mid-time of their career—that it was an accident which led them to take the particular side they did, and that they see quite as much to justify the action and the policy of the other side as of their own.

Now, if Philosophy be (as already briefly indicated) a quest for unity within multiplicity—or for singleness and harmony within the distractingness of detail—it may surely be considered one of the perennial interests of the human race. Science differentiates, and is analytic; Philosophy consolidates, and is synthetic. Science must of necessity break up our knowledge into sections, parts, provinces, and independent groups; but it shows no unity between them, except the unity of law, and the everlasting correlation of forces. Philosophy, on the other hand, tries to unite our miscellaneous knowledge of detail at its fountain-head. It thus draws our knowledge up from lower levels, and connects it organically part with part in a living whole.

In one sense it may be admitted that analysis is the starting-point of Philosophy; because when we split up divide and dismember, we are on the way toward accuracy in detail. But the multi-

tudinous view of things, which results from this analysis, is vague and unsatisfactory. In the synthetic process, which gathers details together in a new unity, and interprets them by their relations and correlations each to each, a far higher stage of insight and appreciation is reached.

It is on this ground that a supreme position may be claimed for Philosophy amongst the achievements, and the disciplines, of the human race. It has done more for the world than its best exponents have surmized. It has been the connecting link between other regions of labour, research, and discovery; being an unconscious guide, and regulator of activity in intellectual domains far beyond itself.

Robert Browning once wrote a poem beginning thus,

> I only knew one poet in my time

and, in it, he described that wonderful man who

> Did the King's work all the dim day long

in obscurity, unrecognized and almost unknown to his contemporaries. He was no "poet" in the conventional sense of the term. But he possessed a power, and exercised a function, superior to any; and so Browning called him the one poet of his time. In much the same way Philosophy comes in, to influence and direct the work of the world in spheres beyond itself, spheres in which the most

representative workers, and prominent exponents, are often quite unconscious of its presence.

It would be easy to point out the influence of the higher ideal Philosophy, on the Poetry, the Art, the Literature, and the Politics of the nineteenth century. The whole of our Victorian Literature, to whatsoever section of it one turns, is permeated—saturated one might almost say—with the inner spirit of Philosophy. Our best politicians are philosophers at heart. Several of those who "lead" their parties, in the House of Commons, have done noble work in the speculative literature of this subject. But far more important than the books they have written, is the philosophical wisdom which they have brought into many a national, and many an international debate. Their very career has been philosophical, in the sense that they have introduced Philosophy into the political strife of their time.

Then, in the literary criticism of our age—although one may be compelled to be a critic of the critics—there never was a period in which the higher criticism was more philosophical than it is now. That is a happy omen for its future.*

If understood in the sense in which it has been stated, Philosophy has manifold and most noble functions to discharge, not only to the present age, but to all time coming; functions which can never be superseded. They are essentially permanent,

* The subject referred to in this, and the previous, paragraph is dealt with more fully in other essays which follow.

because Philosophy itself is amaranthine. Its best symbol — and, we must both think and speak through symbols — is that of the phœnix. It invariably rises immortal, from the ashes of the fire that seemed to consume it. It may therefore be presented in new phases, and may fulfil unexpected functions, in the generation that succeeds our own. These coming developments will not only prove its continuity; they will also demonstrate its power of renewing its youth for ever.

It would be rash for the wisest contemporary to forecast the future of Philosophy, whether in this country or elsewhere; but those who are familiar with its more recent developments see the inevitableness of two results.

(1) That the principle of Evolution and Development — and that is to say of processes leading on to products—must very largely influence all our future philosophizing. In other words, the historical method of studying every problem (including pre-historic material, and archæological research) tracing our developed opinions and beliefs back to their antecedents, will be the greatest possible aid to an understanding of its nature and significance.

(2) That after our knowledge of processes has been elaborated, and our acquaintance with phenomena and laws has become relatively complete, there will still exist an intellectual vacuum, which Philosophy alone can fill. What it seeks for, and tries to find, is *a knowledge of what lies behind*

phenomena and their laws, an acquaintance with what outsoars and transcends them; while at the same time it lies within, and penetrates to the core of, the very humblest. Thus understood, Philosophy is—what I think Novalis called it—a sort of "home-sickness," a longing *to be at home everywhere*, to understand the meaning of the most trivial thing in its relation to the Infinite, and to apprehend the significance of the greatest as it bears upon the meanest.

If, with a clear eye and a candid mind, one examines those great philosophical Systems which have succeeded one another throughout the ages, watching their rise decline and fall—if one studies their evolution, and their relation to that vast world of Humanity which they enfold in the friendliest manner, — the historic survey will prove that Philosophy is not a region of darkness, or even of mist; that it is not a sphere of guess-work, and conjecture; but a clear-cut realm of verifiable knowledge. Also, that it is,—as it has always been,—a magnificent intellectual observatory for further outlook. It is not an ocean in which great ships have foundered, or a shore from which their wrecks have been gathered. It is rather an arena of high endeavour, into which have descended one by one the mightiest spirits of our race, to wrestle in no ignoble manner with the problems which never grow old, and cannot become stale, because they lie close to the universal heart of man.

II

NATIONALITY AS AN ELEMENT IN THE EVOLUTION OF PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophy of the World is an organic whole, which has moved forward in uninterrupted continuity,—although not always at the same speed, or on the same lines,—from the first to the last stage of its evolution. What has occasionally seemed to the casual observer to be a break in its development, owing to the absence of visible links, has afterwards—when the missing links have been discovered—become part of a chain of evidence, demonstrating the unity of the whole process.

The theory of a continuous mundane development, creating by slow evolution those products, which are themselves destined to be superseded by new ones—in other words, the theory of "a perpetual becoming" — has grown in scientific clearness from the day of Heraclitus to our own; and is now accepted, with few dissentient voices, by those who have been initiated in Philosophy. But this doctrine of becoming is the theoretic interpretation of only one aspect of the universe.

If "all things are double one against another," what endures is as important as that which changes; and the Eleatic Philosophy is as true as the Heraclitic. Unity and variety together constitute the totality of existence; and each is necessary to the other. Paradoxical as it may seem, permanence lies at the background of every change; while perpetual change is the *conditio sine qua non* of all endurance.

To apply this generalization at once to the subject to be discussed. In a certain sense, the whole Philosophy of the World is radically one. Being the outcome of a continuous cosmic process, operating in all lands, its problems are fundamentally the same; but, within each country, they differentiate themselves in detail. The surface variety has been necessary to exhibit the underlying unity, while the latter has been equally needed to unite the miscellaneous fragments in a single whole.

The truth embodied in the law of Evolution has proved, to most thoughtful persons, that the numerous phases of opinion and belief, as well as the manifold types of national character which have arisen in the course of History, have in no single instance been matter of accident or chance. They have been due to radical, if not to racial, characteristics of Human Nature; and they are therefore likely to be as persistent as any of the types of organic structure, which the sciences disclose. The bent, or national tendency, of every people is due

to myriad influences playing upon it from the dawn of time. These influences which have, in a subtle way, marked it off from all others, are often occult, and underworking. They are not always known by those who inherit them from within, or receive them from without; and they are seldom visible to others. What becomes apparent in the recorded history of a nation is but a fragment of that which has gone to the formation of the national character. The latter has been due to the joint operation of causes both external and internal, and of forces which have worked beneath as well as above the stream of development.

This principle applies to all the elements which go to constitute the life of mankind. Like every other product, the Philosophy of the World has passed through multitudinous phases; widely different each from each in the amount of insight they have shewn, but all of them of value to the race at large. If the Literature, the Art, the Politics, the Social Life, and the Religion of the world together constitute a vital whole — which assumes different phases here and there, because of the localities in which it works—its Philosophy is certainly no exception to this law of development. While there has been an organic unity operating underneath all change,—and even guiding apparent anomalies of form,—variety of aspect has been equally necessary; and the expansion of Philosophy throughout the ages has been due to the joint influence of them both.

If, however, the historian of Philosophy attempted to trace its developments from a cosmopolitan point of view, ignoring the differences of race and nationality, he would pass from country to country in a somewhat bewildering fashion. Organic differences would baffle him, in any attempt to trace the underlying unity with a steady hand. It is therefore necessary not only to recognize, but to emphasize, the differences which now exist; and to trace them carefully in detail, while indicating their common origin. The old historians of Philosophy were, for the most part, mere chroniclers. They put down in their books a series of statements, more or less accurate, as to what this or that philosopher thought, or "held," or taught. These recorded opinions were mere isolated *dicta*, chronicled in an irregular manner, with no attempt to trace their origin, their connection, or their influence. Others, since the time of Ritter, have tried to exhibit the course of Philosophy as one of organic growth; and all the numerous and noteworthy histories of it, which have been written in Germany, France, and England since Ritter's time—although their interpretations and criticisms may have been coloured by the particular school of thought to which the writer belonged—have adopted, more or less, the guiding principle of his book.

It has now become so obvious as to amount almost to a commonplace, that an adequate history of Philosophy can be constructed, only when the

thought of the world is regarded as an organic whole; and when every phase of it—including those which to us in the present century may be grotesque, or even repulsive—receives its due, as the passing aspect of an underlying tendency. But, while every link in the chain is seen to be a real element in the cosmos—and some of the things which a mature civilization considers "least honourable" are nevertheless recognized as having contributed to the final result—it is absolutely necessary for the historian to take up nation after nation, *seriatim;* to deal with each of them individually, tracing those collateral influences which have come into it from abroad, as well as those which have reached it by direct inheritance within its own area.

It is easy to over-magnify the local influences which have shaped the Philosophy of a particular people; while the wider racial ones, underlying all provincial tendencies, are ignored. But, while many histories of Philosophy, since Ritter's time, have been compiled with the view of exhibiting the "increasing purpose" of the whole, few writers (if any) have tried to unfold the characteristics of each race, as an organic growth within its own domain, or province. I therefore think that it should be the aim of future historians to shew the fundamental differences inherent in each race —and thus to explain the local phases and peculiarities of development—rather than to emphasize the underlying unity of the thought of the world.

That there is a distinctive national colour, in all the great philosophies, cannot be denied by any competently informed person; nor can it be ignored in an adequate historical treatment of them. It is also important to note that a scientific examination of the provincial aspects of Philosophy is, on the whole, a return to precision, from the vagueness which a sense of the unity of the thought of the world is apt to engender. If we start with the cosmopolitan idea, and with the two main "streams of tendency"—the real and the ideal—and traverse the centuries with their aid, setting down so much as due to idealism and so much to realism, we do not achieve much in the way of explanation, and we are apt to become nebulous or hazy.

Nowadays, when every one in the world is a sort of "next door neighbour"—when we have "thrown a girdle round the earth" in less than "forty seconds," and may soon be able to telephone to the very ends of the world—we are probably inclined to over-estimate the unity of the race. But there is no evidence to shew that acquaintance with other communities, and a knowledge of their distinctive features—knowledge which grows so rapidly in an age of scientific progress—will tend to produce greater uniformity of type, will lessen the differences which exist, or minimize the distinctive features of each man, woman, or child.

Besides, the abolition of its differences would be a serious loss to the world at large. Even were it possible, it would be a prodigious mistake to

attempt to reduce the races of mankind to a dead level of uniformity, to europeanise the Indian, to asiaticise the African, to americanise the Polynesian, and so on. It would not only be a very wasteful policy to each of them while it lasted, but it would involve a serious loss to the world, were it even partially successful. What we need is the removal of every obstacle to individual and national development. Each race demands the freest possible evolution of opinion, character, belief, and action in all directions; "live and let live" being the law of the house, alike in individual families, and in mixed communities of men. Every extreme corrects, if it does not neutralize, the rest; and if the differentiation of the race be carried much further in the future, its unity instead of disappearing will become more and more apparent.

Within each nation, however, normal development proceeds from within outwards, not from without inwards. The higher culture must not be superimposed *ab extra*, it must be evolved *ab intra*. It must be reached by the slow processes of interior growth, and subsequent expansion. We cannot raise a people low in civilization up to a higher level, by thrusting upon it an alien type of life and culture, still less by making use of compulsion. We may graft, with the utmost skill, a new branch on the old stem; but, even in that case, the old will dominate the new, not the new the old. A conviction which is to last, and to bear fruit, must invariably proceed from within. If it is to endure,

it must be educed; and that involves a long, and often a tedious, historic process. The result is very seldom accomplished by argument. It is much more largely due to unconscious agencies than to conscious forces. It would seem to be the case that there must be a concurrent development of the physical frame and the animal functions, with an increase of brain-power, and a refinement of feeling; in other words, a growth of "the senses and the intellect" on the one hand, of "the emotions and the will" on the other, before any radically new manifestation of Human Nature can take place.

Another point of importance is this. The time during which the several races of mankind have already lasted has some bearing on the question of their probable duration. If the lower types began their career much further back, and have therefore a greater ancestry than the higher ones, it may be asked, "Have they none of the prescriptive rights of primogeniture?" In the physical cosmos outside of man we find organisms persistent for millions of years, and doing great service to the world; and it is most natural to ask why all the lower types of Human Nature should be uprooted, to make room for what we call (and rightly call) the higher ones; while every type is relative to a zero-point, from which they all have started, which gives us a standard for comparison, and by which the excellence of each may be appraised? We may surely ask, why all the lower races should be sacrificed

for the good of the higher ones? And we may answer the question in the same way in which most humane persons object to the callous vivisection of our canine friends, for a remote possible benefit to the human race. Then, have we not found historically that the higher races have occasionally (and most righteously) been superseded by the lower ones, although only for a time?

More important it is to note that many persons who forsake a lower for a higher creed bring with them, and cannot help bringing, much that passed current in the lower; while the two cannot amalgamate. Many who abandon the customs of their country, who give up—it may be on conviction, or it may be through bribery—the faith of their ancestors, adopting a new cult, and becoming "proselytes of the gate" at the instigation of the missionary, develop sundry vices in the course of the process. Any one who, on a sudden, accepts ideas which are not native to him, and practices which are not hereditary, becomes unnatural. He loses, rather than gains, by the process. Contact with the higher types of civilization has not always elevated the lower. It is so much easier for the latter to assimilate the vices, than to imitate the virtues of the former; and the healthy relation between the two, when they happen to be brought into contact, is not that the higher should force its customs or practices, its Religion, or Government, or Philosophy upon the lower—still less that the lower should try to extinguish the higher—but that

each should tolerate the other, and gain from contact with it, as much as it can healthily assimilate.

It follows that it is not only a weakness, it is practical folly for the votaries of any one type of civilization to act upon the principle "this is the best for all mankind." A system of belief or practice which is not indigenous—even although it is the outcome of a higher civilization, developing itself elsewhere—if transplanted to a foreign soil, is doomed to failure *ab initio*. If it seems to succeed for a time, its success is always more apparent than real; and in a vast number of instances, the reactions are stupendous. The reason is that the old currents of belief and practice, which were hereditary race-elements, continue to operate silently, underneath the new "stream of tendency." Differentiation is of course incessantly at work, never ceasing for a moment of time amongst any people: but the healthful changes are always slow and gradual ones, which do not record themselves at once. If written at the time, it is by a sort of invisible ink, which only becomes apparent after being subjected to the fire.

If, on this matter, we appeal to history—wisely recorded and interpreted—we find that, although it has been possible to *force* new laws, manners and customs, even a new Language, Philosophy, and Religion, on a conquered people, the success of the victor has been a deceptive triumph. The conquered people are crushed for a time. They

are humiliated, perhaps made sullen by defeat; but they are usually ready for a fresh trial of strength, at the earliest possible opportunity. By the curious glamour of reaction from antiquated habit, what has been artificially introduced, even by conquest, may be welcomed for a time; and it is almost certain to be hailed by those who appreciate novelty; but the superior race, thrusting its latest ideals on one with which they have no constitutional affinity, may—by its sudden dominancy—destroy the native bloom of character and habit in the inferior people; while a subsequent reaction may drive the latter race to a lower level than that from which it was apparently but only artificially raised.

It must be admitted that some crude developments, or diseased products, of our humanity may be dealt with at once by drastic processes; that is to say, by the rapid incoming of new, and at times of militant influence. Such an advent of beneficent power may legitimately extinguish, by its strong hand, the excesses of a rudimentary civilization; and humanity at large is the gainer by such a process of physical and moral surgery combined.* Nevertheless, in all cases of one civilization superseding another, the transitions should be as gradual as it is possible to make them.

Even were it possible artificially to combine two races (a higher and a lower), as provinces can be

* For example, infanticide, slave-dealing, the burning of suspected witches, cruelty to all who differ from you, etc. etc., might be dealt with, as every civilized people now deal with cannibalism.

territorially annexed, this would not prove either, first, that all the members of the lower were able to receive the higher type of thought, feeling, and action; or secondly, that the higher might not be injured by receiving and assimilating the practices of the lower. If a higher race cannot intermarry with a lower, and have a progeny that is healthful, it is surely worse than useless to attempt a forcible intermarriage of ideas. But what is often aimed at is not the intermarriage of ideas, but the complete substitution of one set for another. It is the inoculation of the lower races, by the opinions of the higher; and the superimposition of the latter on the former, so as to raise them to a new level, by external means.

This applies not only to the African, the American, and some of the Asiatic races, but also to several European ones. Contact with the people of a different race amongst ourselves in the West, has often hindered rather than helped their development. The prejudices and the vices of the new race have been transmitted, and even intensified, more quickly than its virtues; while some of the dormant excellences of the inferior people have died away in the process.

On the other hand, there can be little doubt that the introduction of a new type of civilization in the midst of an old one has at times touched the latter in its deepest parts. It has occasionally quickened the development of powers, which have been lying latent for centuries. What has at first

seemed a disaster to a nation, which has lived for generations in a particular groove, and been there under the influence of a few provincial ideas, has afterwards led to more than a renewal of its youth. The introduction of elements, which have coalesced naturally with those which were verging to decay, has given a fresh lease of life to such a people; and here we reach the sole ground on which the work of the missionary of another creed who aims at being the pioneer of a new civilization can be defended. There is no limit to the influence which may be exercised by the higher races over the lower, if such influence be exerted naturally, and by wise methods.

Turning now from these semi-anthropological considerations, I reach the more strictly philosophical problem of the relation in which the race stands to the individual, and the individual to the race—or of the many to the one, and the one to the many—in the matter of intellectual system-building. There is no doubt that the two factors in the historic evolution of the human race have been the power of the individual in leading the masses, and the power of the masses in controlling the individual. These two are complementary forces, centrifugal and centripetal. The power of the individual in determining a new forward movement amongst the mass of his contemporaries is quite as great as any power they can exert in restraining him from a too rapid, it may be a meteoric progress. When a community has sunk

into a somewhat monotonous uniformity—whether of belief or of practice—when it has been working steadily on in the grooves of tradition, a longing, half understood at first, begins to arise within it for the appearance of a new Leader, for the guidance of an Individual, for the "coming man," who will be able to focus contemporary wants, and to interpret them.

In every corporate body—whether it be a State, or a Church, or a Philosophical School—there must be leaders; and it is by the commanding force of its greater minds and wills, by their individuality and their special power, that all re-formations of opinion and practice are wrought out. The stronger have always given the law to the weaker, although it is also true, as a poet puts it, that "strongest minds are those of whom this noisy world hears least": but to suppose that the great movements of history, and the formation of its chief Philosophies, or Social Institutions, have been due to the unconscious working of blind forces is as great a mistake as it is to ignore or undervalue the latter. The brain power of the individual has been a potent factor in the formation of every philosophical system, and it comes out in many ways. It is needed 1st, adequately to understand the spirit of the age, 2nd, to divine its latent tendencies, and appraise its underworking currents, 3rd, to guide it onwards in a wise and fruitful manner, 4th, to reconstruct and reinterpret ancient theories, by bringing them into vital relation with

the present age, and 5th, to sow the seeds of future development in a natural manner.

These and many other points, might now be considered in detail; but as the aim of the present discussion is rather to urge the importance of the opposite and balancing truth of the influence of Race and Nationality in determining the great systems of opinion, an illustration of this thesis —founded on the contrast between Greek Philosophy, and its Oriental types — may be more appropriate.

Greece was the land of the ideal, in every sense of the word; and there it was that the ideal was first made real to the human consciousness. The fascination which the race inhabiting that little promontory of the Aegean has exercised over the thought and the art of the world—over its letters, its science, and its politics—has had no parallel in subsequent history. While each nation has contributed its own share to the progress of humanity—and we may say in general that from the Semitic races we have inherited our Religion, from Greece our Philosophy and Art combined, and from Italy our Law—the Hellenic spirit has ruled the world in a manner altogether unique.

This has been due to many concurrent causes. Perhaps the most remarkable feature, in the Greek world taken as a whole, is its manifoldness, and its manifold completeness; in other words, the rapid development of the human intellect and genius, in many different directions simultaneously, and

its perfection in each; so that the productions of Greece remain to this hour, the admiration and the despair of the world. No subsequent type of civilization has transcended it, so that the great Hellenic achievements remain in the very forefront of the world's development, even while an "increasing purpose" has been running through the subsequent ages. In the department of Philosophy, while the speculative thought of the world has of necessity changed, we find in Greece the germs of every subsequent theory; and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, we find the later opinion of the world continually reverting to the positions taken up in the earlier Greek schools. There we find the teachings of Philosophy expressed with the greatest clearness and vigour, as well as subtlety; and we find its distinctive types more sharply defined, than anywhere else, until we reach the Philosophy of the last two centuries.

Another general feature in the Philosophy of Greece is the singularly rapid development and succession of its schools, produced by the active movements of thought within them. One system led on, swiftly and inevitably to another; the existence of the latter being due to the very completeness which characterised its predecessor. This rapid succession of systems was not a symptom of intellectual decay, but of vitality. The quick absorption and assimilation of the elements which nourish the intellectual life of a people is a sign

of sustained national vigour. And so, in marked contrast to the uniformity and stagnation which characterized the brooding East, Greece presents the spectacle of ceaseless activity, and incessant change.

This was doubtless due to the manifoldness of the life of the nation, as much as to anything else; and (to what has been already mentioned), the intellectual reciprocity, or indebtedness of its Philosophy to its Art, of its Art to its Politics, and its Politics to its Religion. Out of the friction of old ideas, and their incessant commingling, new ones emerged. In contrast with this, in the East where tradition for the most part ruled the national mind, it at the same time repressed and fettered it. There was no free play of thought, to break up the routine of the past, and to interfere with the monotony of precedent. If it was reverence that kept the Semitic mind perennially loyal to a few leading ideas, a certain intellectual timorousness—with languor, and love of ease, and other causes, due to climate, race, and temperament—kept the Eastern mind moving sedately, and at times austerely, along the lines of immemorial tradition.

There was no desire for change, no thirst for progress, no demand for liberty, such as we find in the West. Hence the uniformity which characterizes the Mythology, the Art, the Government of the East, as well as its Philosophy. We find vastness, rigidity, and sameness. Where

there is not repression, there is barbaric glitter, and monotonous splendour. The type of mental and moral character among all the Eastern peoples is for the most part the same. It is like the tropical vegetation, of more uniform feature than that which has been developed in the temperate zone. As some one—was it Hegel?—well remarked, the jungle is the physical type of the intellectual and moral life of the East; and it was the want of intellect—with its freedom and movement, its endless bright developments—that kept the East so stationary in Philosophy and Religion, as well as in Government and Art, and prevented the rise of the Sciences. A cumbrous and elaborate ritual overlaid the life of the people, with precepts and practices that fettered it.

In contrast with this, it was perhaps due to the inherent vigour of the primitive settlers on the rocky peninsula of Hellas, and to the rapid mingling of diverse races, as wave after wave of emigration and of conquest swept westwards, and turned southwards, from the primitive Aryan home—wherever it was—that the world owes the singular union of flexibility and strength, of force, freedom and pliancy, characteristic of the Greek mind. In Greece, as in the East, climatic causes co-operated with racial tendency; and the physical features of the land—with their variety, and compact beauty—aided the development of national character. Greece was not the land in which Nature could subdue man, or dominate over him.

It was pre-eminently the country in which man would become the interpreter of Nature; in which also he would be able to manipulate her forms, and be a deft and cunning workman in the idealization of them. It was not a land in which a doctrine of *nirvana* could possibly arise, or be appreciated. The active and subtile intellect of the people, and its æsthetic and athletic spirit combined, prevented this. Thus, from the very first, the philosophy and the mythology of Greece differed from that of the East, and reflected the free creative intelligence of the people.

Another feature which characterized the literature and life of the Hellenic race, as well as its Philosophy, was its love of directness, its going straight to the mark, without intricacy obscurity or twist. Abundant evidence of this is seen in the evolution of its philosophical schools. Its early infantile curiosity, and its subsequent youthful boldness (often amounting to rashness), are evident; but intellectual thoroughness, and clear-eyed direct intelligence, are dominant throughout. Many of its early thinkers imagined that they had found a single key by which they could unlock the mystery of the universe at large; but, in these early schools, as well as in the later ones, we find an effort to pierce—by the sheer force of thought, as far as thought could carry—beneath the symbols that obscured, and the metaphors that entangled it.

Metaphoric conceptions ruled the East. They

ruled the Semitic mind, and coloured the whole religious literature of the Jews, where anthropomorphic ideas had the upper hand. In Greece, on the contrary, from the very first, speculative minds sought to reach the shrine of pure Being, by the avenue of pure Thought. Vagueness, and even mystery, were abhorrent to them. The blue heaven above, and the bright sea around, suggested clearness, as well as depth; and depth without clearness was not esteemed in Greece. Hence vague suggestions were tracked, if possible, to their root; and were analysed, with a view to the removal of the vagueness, by a process of verification. The Greek did not naturally care for, or believe in, vague impulses which he could not name. Distrusting dim monitors within, the Hellenic mind wished that they should all be brought out of their lurking places into the light, and that they should answer for themselves in the court of logical appeal. In this there was an element of weakness, as well as of strength; but the historical fact to be noted is that in the whole national life of Greece, we see a striving after *clear conviction;* and this love of light, and perpetual "coming to the light," may be said to have given rise to the long succession of its schools of Philosophy.

An equally significant illustration of the influence of Race and Nationality in determining the characteristics of philosophical thought, is to be seen in the modern German "stream of

tendency," as compared with the French, the Italian, and the Scandinavian; and in the British and American stream, as compared with the Continental European. All of them, however, are reserved for future treatment.

III

OUR PRESENT PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK

THE problem of the present Outlook in Philosophy may be dealt with in several different ways. It might be prefaced by a historical sketch of former tendencies in Philosophy, our anticipations of the future being based upon our knowledge of the past—in which case the discussion might be described as in another paper in this volume, "Prospects, in the light of Retrospects"—or, it might be merely a review of existing tendencies at work, amongst us and around us, the "outlooker" noting what forces are for the time being in the ascendant, and indicating what are dormant; or, it might be a combination of these two methods of treatment, the entire survey bringing out both our losses and our gains, and indicating some *desiderata* in the Philosophy of the future.

In what follows I try to combine these methods, so far as practicable.

Looking back then—trying to forecast the future not so much in the light of the present as of the past, and remembering that "the thing that

hath been it is that which shall be"—it does not seem presumptuous to affirm.

First, that the attainment of uniformity in philosophical opinion is a utopian dream. Finality in the speculative doctrines of the world is absolutely impossible; and, if there is to be no finality, a millennium of uniformity would mean the absolute ossification of belief, as well as the collapse and ruin of Philosophy itself. Just as certainly as that no political party can continue for ever in power, that no nation can direct and control the destinies of the world for ever, that no Religion can monopolize the intellectual assent of the race, no system of Philosophy can ever reign supreme and final. This is, however, one of the commonplaces of the literary and historic judgment of all competent scholars. I therefore pass from it.

Second, and more particularly, we must expect the continuance and development of two great "streams of tendency" within the philosophical world, one of them the real, the other the ideal stream; the former contented with (if not rejoicing in) phenomenal fact and law; the latter, discontented with fact and law, endeavouring to transcend them, and to reach the ideal *somewhere*. I anticipate, in the Twentieth Century, the rise and continuance of *many* new and antagonistic schools of Philosophy; but I think that they will be separated from one another, in the main, by the old line of cleavage, viz. that between the Realists and the Idealists. I anticipate that their differences will

increase, and be rather more sharply accentuated than diminished; the increase, and accentuation being due to fresh vigour of thought, and additional clear-sightedness. Each of the two great schools will see new reasons for emphasizing its special view of the Universe, and for magnifying it in every possible way.

Third, I anticipate, within these two intellectual camps, the continuance in new forms of all the main theories of the Universe, which have hitherto dominated the thought of the world. One after another they have seemed to be overthrown; but in no case, has their disappearance been due to the unearthing of the root whence they have sprung; in other words, to a change in the constitution of Human Nature itself. The evolution of that nature being a continuous process, new varieties of opinion and belief will continue to be evolved alongside of its unity. Differentiation will work side by side with integration in all time to come. In the future treatment of the fundamental and perennial problems of human interest, every one of them will be re-stated afresh over and over again, thought out anew from root to branch; and, in virtue of this, the Philosophy of the Twentieth Century will be as different from that of the Nineteenth, as ours has been different from Eighteenth Century speculation. I maintain that while nothing can hinder the continuance and re-appearance both of Idealism and Realism, they will come back to our successors in new phases; and

that their return, and the characteristics they may assume, will be determined by unconscious as well as by conscious forces.

One thing which will conduce to this is the amount of vigorous criticism which every one of the great schools has hitherto received—and must continue to receive—from its opponent. Dealt with severely and justly, each must undergo a radical change. It cannot re-appear in its previous form, or aspect. While the *essence* of all remain, their outward form will be different. Their errors will be set aside, and their extravagances cleared away.

Fourth, I anticipate in the future a much larger tolerance for diversities of philosophical opinion, than has hitherto existed; and I think that those who have adopted a special speculative creed as their own—which they may have either inherited, or acquired, and who therefore remain loyal to it, will see much more in other and opposing theories than it has been customary for their predecessors to see in them, and will therefore try to do them greater justice. In other words, there will be a further development of a desire to get at the *root of truth* within all conflicting or antagonistic systems. It will be "the aim of the wise" to separate each truth from the extravagance with which it has been previously, and temporarily, associated; while every new critic of the hour will realize that *his* appraisal of the past is destined to be in time superseded, if not entirely ignored.

This brings me to the mental attitude—so easily caricatured and misrepresented — which I have advocated ever since my student days, half a century ago.* In the early fifties of 1800, in the "Edinburgh Metaphysical and Ethical Society"—one very similar to yours—I used to try to vindicate Victor Cousin from the opprobrium into which he had fallen, notwithstanding that my much revered teacher, Sir William Hamilton, had honoured him as the advocate of a new and high Philosophy in France, dedicating his own *Discussions on Philosophy* to him. Cousin was explicitly an eclectic, which Hamilton was not. I adopted the term, introduced by the former, as descriptive of the highest style of philosophizing, and I tried to vindicate it, in many essays and discussions in that Society. Now, let the *word* "Eclectic" be disregarded, or disesteemed — and I admit its inadequacy, because it seems to see truth everywhere, and error nowhere—nevertheless I maintain that it describes a tendency which is fundamentally noble, philosophically just, and salutary to the very core; while the system of intellectual activity to which it gives rise is as progressive as it is conservative.

Fifth, and as almost a corollary from the last proposition, I think that the historical method of examining and dealing with past opinion and theory will continue to grow, and that it will develop a

* And here I may perhaps be forgiven for introducing a quasi-personal allusion.

deeper understanding of the root-principle of every one of them. As I have said elsewhere, the philosophers of the future will understand better than we do "the rock out of which we have been hewn," and "the pit whence we have been dug." The historians of the future will deal not only with individual or national movements, but with those great racial tendencies which underlie them both. They will not write their books, as Sextus Empiricus or Diogenes Laertius wrote theirs, men to whom all opinions were equally good or equally bad—the variety of each being quoted as proof of the untrustworthiness of all, and therefore as a justification of σκέψις; nor, will they write them as the German historians of last century did—notably Brucker, Tiedemann, and Tennemann—making the *dicta* of a particular school the test by which we should judge of the merit, or assign the demerit of every other system; nor even, as Hegel and Comte did, bringing forward preconceptions as to what the course of Philosophy must be, and thus reading into earlier systems later philosophical ideas; but they will look upon the multitudinous thought of the World as an organic unity, evolving itself now in this system and now in that, each containing a fragment of truth, but not the whole of it; and each, while seemingly antagonistic to the other, not actually opposed, but in its essence supplemental.

Sixth, I think that this historic method of examining and dealing with all systems and problems—

which is both a sequel to the doctrine, and an outcome of the spirit of evolution already referred to—a method which has dominated the whole of the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, is certain to continue. Evolution—though as old as the dawn of Philosophy—is the most vital and far-reaching of our Nineteenth Century conceptions of the Universe, and it has never been so articulately stated, or so conclusively proved, as in our recent philosophical and scientific literature.

It should be noted, however, that it is in the main, a historic theory, or rather, a theory of history. It traces the growth and progress, the rise decline and fall, of everything that has been or now is; and it leads, naturally and inevitably, to a new theory of Truth and Error. Here I re-state, for the sake of greater clearness, what has been already advanced. It is now seen with noonday clearness, in the light of Evolution, by all who possess the "inward eye," that no "system" of opinion can possibly have either a monopoly of truth or a monopoly of error. None is wholly true, none is absolutely false; but all are approximations to reality, simply because they have been *evolved;* and because each is, at its best, only the surface index of ever working processes in the continuous thought of the world.

Now this way of stating the case—viz. that error is merely extravagance, or the pushing of a thing that is true to a point which is extreme;

and that Truth is only an approximation to that which infinitely transcends, not only our formulæ, but our powers of apprehension—may, to some minds, seem to minimize what it really magnifies. I reply that it only minimizes the value of our individual work in the matter of system-building; which, when examined by others, may turn out to be a process of erecting "castles in the air." On the other hand, it magnifies the organic persistent ubiquitous underlying thought of the world. It overthrows the conceit that we have by our "systems" attained to anything very lasting; and thus the ancient and most venerable terms, "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy"—are not only divested of their negative significance, they are seen to have positively no philosophical meaning at all.

But observe the distinctions between Truth and Error are not obliterated, nor are the differences between Right and Wrong ignored. *Quite the contrary;* but the localities in which they are to be respectively found, the varying amounts in which they respectively exist, and the extent to which each is associated with its opposite, as well as the means of their separation—all these are seen in a totally different light from that under which they used to be discerned.

Of human thought I maintain that no system could ever have emerged, and lived, were it erroneous at its root; and also that in all of them, even in the best and the highest, there are elements of

partiality, and therefore of decay; while from the worst there is something to be extracted that is worthy of life.

To very many of our contemporary students and workers in Philosophy it is the hope of the future that,

> Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be.

But this, so far from leading to agnosticism, or to pessimism in any of its phases, leads (*me judice*) to a profounder gnosticism, or doctrine of knowledge; and to a nobler, because a more earnest, purpose in life than was possible under the old orthodoxies. And why? I am not a pantheist, when I say with St Augustine, as well as with Erigena and Spinoza, that I see God everywhere and in everything, that I discern a divine unity within the ever evolving cosmic processes; and that I believe in what the poet of the "Higher Pantheism" called

> The one far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

It is for this reason that I am hopeful about the future of Philosophy. Let Science—whether it be agnostic or not—march where it will, and as it will—annexing province after province to its realm; and, in our special realm, let us experience as many and as great reactions as that which now exists in Germany, where metaphysics seem to have been defeated for a time, out-thrust

from its native home—while physiology, and experiential psychology have almost entirely taken its place—it can only be a temporary reaction. It may have been perhaps as necessary for modern Europe, as the Aristotelian recoil from the ultra-idealism of Plato was natural and necessary. But, in the nature of things, it can only last in the Teutonic race for a very short space of time. And I think that, when the idealistic tidal wave returns, when metaphysical Philosophy resumes its natural ascendancy, it will come back all the stronger because of the temporary domination of the systems which have ignored it. The continuance of metaphysical Philosophy, and the perdurance of Theology, are to me as certain, as the return of morning after evening, or of summer after winter; and they will to the very end of time retain their ancient rank, their place of imperial supremacy, in the forefront of all the sections of human knowledge. And why? For this reason; that the problems with which they deal, and which—even while "seeing through a glass darkly"—they solve "in part," are problems of perennial interest alike to the intellect and the heart of man, to which even the physicist returns with unabated ardour, after his solutions within the realm of phenomena are corroborated as well as discovered.

Seventh, what I have advocated in previous paragraphs has an important bearing on the pessimism of the Nineteenth Century. Our modern pessimism is not so much theoretical as practical.

Europe has at present no Schopenhauer or Von Hartmann. But while neither pessimism nor optimism are speculatively tenable as philosophical theories, it is to be noted that pessimism of a somewhat curious type almost invariably follows or attends the agnostic attitude of mind. Enthusiasm is lessened if it is not extinguished by it. Cheerfulness, hopefulness, readiness to face evils courageously, willingness to embark in, and to die for, great causes; all these diminish as the agnostic spirit grows. Afterwards *ennui* sets in, such life-weariness as occasionally tempts to suicide, as the best exit from those "ills that flesh is heir to."

This practical pessimism has infected modern Society, our Nineteenth Century Literature and Politics, in very curious ways; but it will not last. I am of opinion that what is needed, along with a more comprehensive and just estimate of the past—with a knowledge of the origin of its philosophic, religious, and social systems—is a moral *tonic*, that will make our philosophical outlook a more hopeful one. We need more *rational enthusiasm* alike in our Social Life, our Politics, our Art, and our Religion. We are now divided into many parties, and must always be so; but while the wise builders of bridges to span the chasms which separate us—bridges of sympathy, if not of intellectual agreement—are always to be honoured, the great virtue for each leader in my opinion is at one and the same to hold to his own position—to magnify it, and to make it honourable

to the best of his ability—and to recognize that it is only one out of many equally tenable, and equally valuable. And now, for an illustration. I am a Scot, and I am proud of my country, its characteristics, its history, its literature, and its achievements generally; but, I also know its limitations and prejudices, its frequent dourness, thrawness and provincialism; and I can't be one of those who

> Take the rustic murmur of their burg
> For the great wave that echoes round the world.

It must be admitted that the cosmopolitan thinker, wide-minded and catholic-hearted—who sees good everywhere—is at times apt to be remiss in practical work. He is not so easily *roused*—as the partisan can be roused—to toil for a special cause. If we believe that a particular line of effort is the only right, or the supremely right one, we will work for it with ardour. Contrariwise, if we think that all have a valid *raison d'être*, we are not so easily stirred up to defend our own. Nevertheless I think it is quite possible to combine the widest theoretical catholicity of opinion with the utmost practical ardour and enthusiasm in forwarding great causes.

Eighth, I have already indicated my belief that the future of Philosophy is as certain as is the survival of the principle of curiosity; but it may be useful to point out some of the signs of its present influence, in quarters where it has not

always been felt in the same way, or at least to the same extent. If it surrounds pervades and interpenetrates every other department of knowledge, evidence of its latent presence ought to be found in unexpected places; and this is exactly what we find in the Literature, the Art, and the Politics of the Nineteenth Century. It is true that to make room for the special sciences, which are more immediately useful in supplying those who seek the best professional outfit, Philosophy has been of late thrust into the background; and, even within its own area, it is perhaps not so popular at present as it used to be.

By the Ordinances of the late Scottish Universities Commission, the seven subjects once obligatory for the degree of Master of Arts are no longer necessary for it; three out of the old seven may be put aside, and any of the Sciences may take their place. I was one of those who thought, and advocated, that the old heptarchy of subjects should remain the *conditio sine qua non* of our M.A. degree; and that all the Sciences, new and old together, should be included within an enlarged B.Sc. degree. But there is no use discussing that now. *Res finita est. quæstio cadit.* Our successors will see—the Twentieth Century developments will shew them—whether the new legislation is an advantage over the old. But at present candidates for the Scottish M.A. degree can dispense with one of the two subjects of Latin or Greek, and with either Logic or Moral Philosophy;

and, in consequence, Greek and Moral Philosophy suffer heavily. They are now practically discouraged as subjects of study in our Universities.

Turn now to London. In that great University, Philosophy has been reduced from its old pre-eminence as an obligatory subject; and it is, through the Examination rules laid down by the Senate, for its University degrees, made an alternative one.* Many tried to prevent this, but to no effect; and the result is that in the Colleges which specially train for the examination—such as University College, London—the number of students in Philosophy has declined. The same complaint is made in the Victoria University, which has its Colleges at Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds. Here I am not bringing in a complaint, along with my profound regret; because I know that the Senate of the London University has been almost compelled to do what it has done. By its very constitution and character it must have primary regard to the urgent necessities of the hour; and the prodigious growth of the Sciences which deal with Nature has led the Senate to make these changes.

Speaking generally on the subject it is not only the fascination which these Sciences now exert in themselves, that explains the changes referred to. It is still more the opportunity of utilizing them in so many practical ways, because they can be made

* Nay, Logic and Psychology have been recently struck out from the list of subjects optional for the B.Sc. degree.

to minister to wealth and comfort; and can add so much to the amenities, refinements, and luxuries of life. No wonder that a knowledge of Natural Philosophy (so called), mathematics and engineering is esteemed, since all of them can be applied to gunnery, and to what is necessary for our Army and Navy. No wonder that Geology, Zoology Botany, and Geography are esteemed, since they all can be of use in exploration, and colonization. No wonder that Chemistry is in the ascendant when it can be applied to a score of the practical arts and industries; and so on, and so on, and so on.

But now, *per contra*, I ask you to note (1) that this new programme—both in England, Scotland, our Colonies, and abroad—is mainly due to the notion (may it be a temporary one!) that the chief end of Education is to secure an outfit for professional success, to equip candidates with that kind of knowledge which is needed to enable them to go on "conquering and to conquer" in the race for material prosperity. (2) These successes are not the most important ones, for the race at large. Our humanity has other, and more imperious, needs to which these achievements minister but little. Grant that the external sciences are the most lucrative ones, because they promote individual and national wealth more than others do, have we not needs which transcend the "Wealth of Nations"? and is it not as true now as of old that man "liveth not by bread alone?" It does not

follow that the Sciences which add most to the sum total of human pleasure are, in the long run, the most useful; and it is to counteract the gravitation of human interest towards the material side of life, the obviously utilitarian one, that Philosophy is now more needed than it ever was before. Note further (3) that the education given by Science pure and simple—Science all in all, unaided and uninspired by the older disciplines—is as a rule fragmentary and scrappy. It is apt to be an ill-assorted miscellany of results, often full of technicalities, which are sometimes puerile, the trivial mixed up with the important. In addition (4) the vast expansion of the Sciences has created a fresh need for Philosophy, by opening up new pathways along which it may travel. This could be illustrated in much detail; but I wish rather to point out, in conclusion, how Philosophy—the old guide to the Sciences, and their faithful although sometimes discredited servant—has been silently operating in the midst of all our modern Science, Poetry, Art, History, Politics, and other Nineteenth Century achievements.

First, all our scientific men of eminence admit that they must become philosophers at last, in other words, that their physics must end in Metaphysics. Take Messrs Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Carpenter, Mivart, (I only mention dead men whom I have known). They have all admitted that their inventories of facts and laws will not suffice, that there is a vast residuum behind, in

reference to which philosophical theories may be formulated with no disrespect to science, and with no possibility of science coming in to discredit them. Nay several of these men—as can be shewn by the documentary evidence of their letters—hungered for some solution of the ultimate problem of the Universe beyond the region of phenomenal fact and cosmic law. *Second*, come to the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century. There never was a time in which all the higher Poetry of the world was so inter-penetrated with Philosophy. Glance back in thought to Wordsworth and Coleridge in its first decade, through Shelley (Byron even), Tennyson, the two Brownings, to Clough and Matthew Arnold, with scores of minor singers. The deepest things which they have written have had a root in Philosophy, and a philosophical outcome. As I addressed my class in two opening lectures on "The philosophical undertones of modern Poetry," I shall not repeat anything from these lectures now. I only lay down the thesis that the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century is more profoundly inter-penetrated by philosophical ideas than the Poetry of any earlier century in the world's history has been; and I also think that the Poets have helped the (occasionally prostrate) Metaphysicians, as to the problems of the Origin of Knowledge, of Theism, of Immortality, and of human Duty, in a very remarkable manner. *Third*, as to Art, I maintain that the specialty of the artistic products of the Nineteenth Century—

in so far as they are in advance on the work of preceding eras—is in the main due to the entrance of philosophical ideas, and to the growth and development of them within the realm of the Beautiful. There may be defects in the work of our modern English artists, but if we select the noblest of them, who have dealt with the higher symbolism of their subjects, *e.g.* Turner, almost all the members of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, Dante Rossetti, Millais, Burne-Jones, also Frederick Walker, Albert Goodwin, and *instar omnium* G. F. Watts, with others too numerous to mention, it will be found that there never was a time in which philosophical ideas have influenced Art in the same unique and wonderful manner.

Here I should add that—while it is one of the radical aims of Philosophy to teach us how to rise above allegoric conceptions—and to enter into a sphere where metaphor neither impedes our thought nor arrests its flight — it is within that wonderful sphere of *symbolism* that Art finds its native home, and where the pictured representations of reality are our best and noblest guides. Thus, while in the domain of Philosophy pure and simple, our aim is to escape from metaphoric modes of thought, in the sphere of Art symbolic representations are our best guides to reality; and in this great sphere of symbolic representation, I unhesitatingly place George

Frederick Watts as the noblest teacher of the Nineteenth Century.

Fourth, in History I maintain without fear of contradiction that in the work of Carlyle, Grote, Thirlwall, Froude, Freeman, Stanley, Milman, and a score of others, we can trace the influence of the higher Philosophy, and of a philosophical training underlying all their work. *Fifth*, in Politics it is the same. Was there ever an era, however barren it may be in political progress—although I humbly think that it has been fruitful directly and indirectly beyond all precedent—when the inter-penetrating spirit of Philosophy has influenced and moulded Cabinets, as well as individual Ministers, in the same way and to the same extent?

IV

POETRY AND SCIENCE, THEIR CONTRASTS AND AFFINITIES

All who are familiar with the philosophical discussions of recent years know that there has been acute controversy between the advocates of literary and scientific culture; and that some of the champions on both sides have carried on the debate as if there were a fundamental antagonism between the two sides; and as if the conflict could only cease by the extinction of one of the combatants, and the sole supremacy of the other. It would not be difficult to shew that, as in the case of many minor quarrels, much of the controversy has been due to a misunderstanding; and that, although the debate may have done good, in bringing out the respective merits of each, the difference has been much more apparent than real.

It is only indirectly, however, that I now deal with that question. It is rather of the two different ways of interpreting Nature—to which the scientific, and the literary or poetic temperament respectively tend—that I mean to speak; and, I do not enter

into the controversy, as a partisan of either side. I wish rather to vindicate both, and to shew how the one is the natural complement, or sequel of the other.

A preliminary glance, however, at the old battle of the "rival cultures," may clear the way towards a more adequate discussion of the subject. Whatever used to be the case, in ancient academic haunts, amongst a former race of teachers, half a century ago, I am sure that now-a-days there is no disparagement of Science, in the Universities of Great Britain, or America, or the continent of Europe. There is, on the contrary, quite as generous an acknowledgment of the value of scientific culture, and of the place of science in the curriculum of a liberal education, by the humanists, as there is a recognition of the value of letters, by the scientific specialists. Nay, our modern scholarship is all permeated by the scientific spirit. The Nineteenth Century literary criticism is based upon scientific methods of procedure. I think it is quite incorrect to say—as was said sometime ago by a very distinguished scientific man—that the "humanists of the Nineteenth Century take their stand upon classical study, as the sole avenue of culture, as firmly as if we were still in the age of the Renaissance." I am not aware of any one in the most conservative quarters, in the most mediæval of colleges, who does so; and I question very much if such a position is now maintained in the colleges of the Roman Church.

There is no fear of the under-valuation of Science in our time. On the contrary, the risk is all the other way; and therefore—while my own attitude has always been, and will remain, a catholic and cosmopolitan one—inasmuch as one of the two tendencies is invariably more dominant than the other in every period, I do not scruple to say that the *over-valuation of science may very easily become one of the intellectual heresies of the future.*

And by the term "heresy" I, of course, mean nothing offensive; but simply what the word itself denotes, viz. a sectional or sectarian view of things. Now, if one enters into this controversy with any ardour, it is very difficult not to enter into it as a partisan; and, if one enters into it as a partisan, he is almost sure to state the position he wishes to refute somewhat unfairly. That is, however, the bane of all controversy. Perhaps the antidote may be found in a re-statement of the problem from a fresh point of view.

One way of putting the question at issue between the disputants is this. Is a knowledge of any of the earlier forms of animal life on this planet, say of the protozoa, more important to mankind than a knowledge of the thoughts of Plato and of Aristotle; or, is a knowledge of the laws of electricity more valuable to the race than an initiation into the imaginative wealth of Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, or Wordsworth? To some that may seem an unfair way

of stating the case; but if it looks to them extreme, I may restate it thus: "Is it more important for man to know facts and laws, than to rise above them into the realm of ideas?"

Now, the panegyrists of Science, who are relatively the depreciators of Literature and Philosophy, misconstrue the latter, when they do not recognize anything in the universe that is verifiably true except their own facts and laws. On that view of things, literary and poetic culture is of use mainly in so far as it is ornamental; or as a relief to the votary of knowledge, when he is tired of the study of facts and laws. Perhaps the best way of dealing with that view of the Universe is to make our enquiry into the nature and methods of scientific research more thorough, in other words, to ascertain what it is that Science really does for us; so that we may be in a position to see if anything else remains to be done for us, *by another agency*, at the point where science leaves us, either stranded or bewildered.

It is for this reason that I wish to discuss the relations of Poetry to Science, and of Science to Poetry, rather than to enter further into the claims of scientific and literary culture; because, if we can vindicate for the two, *i.e.* for Poetry and Science, a co-ordinate place and complementary function, their respective merits, as contributing to universal human culture, will be apparent.

Scientific knowledge is a knowledge of facts and laws. It is a knowledge of phenomena reduced

to law, of causes related to their effects, and of effects related to their causes. When anything is known scientifically, it is known not as an isolated fact or event, but in its relation to its antecedents and its sequents. It is scientifically *explained*, when that which gave rise to it, and that to which it gave rise, is understood and explained. Science, therefore, demands that all pre-suppositions, guesses, and theories—as to the causes of events—must be rigorously tested, first by inductive examination, and next by subsequent experiment: and farther, that all alleged facts must be scrutinized and analyzed. One result of this scrutiny and analysis will be that the points on which phenomena resemble each other will be brought out, and that they can then be arranged in departmental groups, or classes. Their order, and their place in the system of Nature, must be discerned and tested. Individual phenomena can be explained by being grouped together and reduced to law. Minor laws can be taken up into major ones; the final aim of the scientific quest being the discovery of an all-comprehending law, within which lesser ones are embraced, and in which they finally disappear from view.

Thus the scientific quest begins with individual existences, and it does so by way of generalization, advancing from a lower to a higher unity, precisely as the area swept by it is extended. Each event being, in the first instance, dealt with analytically, by a process of scrutiny, and by the application

of sundry tests—so as to bring out its real meaning, and to connect it with its antecedents and sequents —but this only prepares the way for a second method of dealing with each isolated fact of experience.

Every one of these isolated facts of experience may be dealt with *synthetically at the first;* that is to say, each may yield us a point of departure, from which we may pass at once—through intuition —to that larger whole of which it is a part; and which it may either directly suggest, or indirectly shadow forth, and may even at times reveal. In other words, instead of being a dark point—on which the light of science must be turned to make it intelligible, or to bring out its meaning—it may be a luminous point, which, by a flash of suggestiveness, shews a meaning latent within it; connecting it, in its isolation and particularity, with the vaster world of the unembodied.

Now, when any fact or event, any phenomenon or occurrence, is regarded by us not in isolation, as a link in the chain of things to be inspected in detail—catalogued, registered, and reduced to law —but as the passing embodiment of what transcends itself, and as yielding as a point of departure toward that larger unity (of which it is a fragment) it is regarded no longer analytically, but synthetically; no longer scientifically, but poetically. The end both of Poetry and of Science may be said to be the attainment of unity, and the ultimate harmony of the universe; but whereas Science begins with

detail, and works up to unity by generalization from detail, Poetry rises—to speak in a figure—with one sweep of wing, to the height whence the whole variety of the Cosmos is seen embraced within that "unity where no division is," after which science laboriously toils. Poetic vision is intuitive, and the unity it seeks is reached by "a fine suddenness." It does not begin by analyzing and cataloguing things, taking inventories in detail, but it carries us straight away, over all chasms, at a single bound to unity. Furthermore, the unity to which Science leads is the unity of *law;* whereas the unity to which Poetry conducts is the unity of *expression*, or inward meaning.

Note, however, that in distinguishing scientific from poetic insight, we distinguish two methods of interrogating and interpreting Nature, which are common to the whole race, and which have been in operation from the very dawn of civilization. It is not a distinction between methods, which are the respective property of poets on the one hand, and scientific specialists on the other. What distinguishes the writer of poems from other men, and what distinguishes the scientific discoverer from the rude observer of Nature, is a most interesting question. What is before us now is something very different, viz., the distinction between that poetic insight which is, or may be, common to all men ; and the scientific insight which is open to every one, although possessed in its supremacy only by a few. It may easily be shewn that there

are certain aspects of the Universe, phases of it, which can be recognized adequately, or even accurately, only by poetic vision; and that there are others, which can only be dealt with through scientific investigation.

In illustration of this let us take any single object, or group of objects, in Nature, *e.g.* the starry heavens, a sunset, a flower, or a gem. How does science deal with these things? In answer we have the sciences of Astronomy, Meteorology, Botany, and Mineralogy. But are the results reached by these sciences exhaustive of the objects with which they respectively deal? Suppose that you have become tolerably familiar with these sciences, have they told you all about the objects with which they are severally concerned?

I think that almost every student of science, in proportion to the thoroughness of his study, will admit that there is a certain fragmentariness in the department of knowledge with which he deals; and that, however satisfactory the results he may reach in the way of discovery, it is unsatisfactory to be confined to details, which he cannot connect together, first in a unity which embraces them along with other phenomena outside or beyond them, and secondly, in a harmony which transcends them all.

Now the point in which poetic vision has the superiority over scientific insight is this. It conducts us to a unity, which embraces the details of the sciences within it. Take the four illustrations

already mentioned. There is something common to the starry heavens, the sunset, the flower, and the gem. That common element within them all, and pervading them, is the spirit of the beautiful and the sublime. It is as real an aspect of Nature, and as worthy of being known, as anything which the four sciences of Astronomy, Meteorology, Botany, and Mineralogy disclose. It manifests itself in a vast variety of ways, but it is essentially one underneath them all; and it is a unity much more easily discernible, and much more readily grasped, than is the unity of Science. Each separate object which awakens the feeling of the Beautiful, opens as it were a door through which we may pass to grasp this vast unity of Nature The specialty of the disclosure which the separate objects afford us is this, that it immediately carries the contemplator far beyond himself, into the wide and boundless realm of the infinitely beautiful.

It will be doubtless said by some, notwithstanding of this—as has already been said a score of times—that there can be no poetic interpretation of Nature that is scientifically demonstrable. In reply, the poet knows very well that he must carry his own subjectivity along with him, into all his interpretations of the external Universe. Less he could not do, without ceasing to be a poet, or even a man. He knows—as one of the great fraternity put it—that an "auxiliar light" comes from the mind, which "on the setting sun bestows new splendour." He cannot help interpreting external

Nature in the light of his own personality; but the poet, and all poetic minds, also know very well that, in their most exalted moods of feeling, insight is deeper than ecstasy; and also that, in these moods, one aspect of the universe is disclosed to them which the logical intellect does not perceive which cannot be discovered by the dry light of Science, and with which Science cannot therefore legitimately interfere.

It is true that this aspect of Nature is recognizable, only in certain states of the percipient mind; and, therefore, the same object may appear quite different to the individual at different times, and still more so to persons of opposite temperament or idiosyncrasy. It is only in certain conditions of the percipient subject that a discernment of the true relation between Man and Nature is possible; and it is only under fixed conditions that it is then realizable. It may be worth noting, however, that the same thing is true of scientific knowledge. That there is a relation of dependence between the soul of man, and the objects which call forth poetic feeling, and evoke poetic insight, is as natural and necessary as is the relation between our intellectual faculties and the objects with which they deal.

No one doubts that Nature appeals to us in certain moods, in a totally different way from that in which she becomes known when we investigate her laws. She has done so from the dawn of time; and the story of the way in which this

appeal has been met is part of the literary history of the world; a most interesting chapter in the book which records the evolution of humanity. Nay, the record of the way in which Nature, in all her aspects, has been regarded by Man throughout the ages forms a large part of the history of human civilization. We can trace it upwards and onwards from the fear of the savage mind, crushed before the might of Nature, to the gradual utilization of the material world by the primitive colonist or settler; and we can see the latter slowly giving place to the curiosity of the primitive investigator. We find also that the primary idea of Nature, as material substance distinct from Man, kept special interest in it in the background; but with the rise of a deeper and truer Philosophy, which considered Nature as a treasury of forces kindred to Man, interest in Nature itself revived. In general it may be said that, so long as nature was conceived of as dead inanimate substance, it was regarded prosaically, although to a certain extent scientifically; and, in so far as it was conceived of as living force, it was regarded poetically.

This brings me back to the distinction between the scientific and poetic tendency, as respectively analytic and synthetic. The poet is not the analyst of Nature, except in so far as he divines the secret of certain of her more hidden aspects; but he apprehends her unity, as the oneness of the manifold suggested to him by intuition. He does this, by the exercise of no special gift which is his alone,

but by the intense action of a power, which is common to him and to the whole race. The writer of poems—the poetic artist—is endowed with keener, quicker, and finer perceptions than other men, with greater sensibility of soul, and a more delicate responsiveness to the ever changing moods of Nature; but so it is also in the *poetic moods* of many who never write poems, but only feel them and discern their truth. In our most receptive assimilative and poetic moods, our perceptions are keener, quicker, and finer than they usually are. It is then that we are most responsive to the direct touch of Nature.

But the scientific quest is never inconsistent with poetic insight or aspiration. On the contrary, it invariably aids the poet, by giving him new points of departure. It does not lessen the glory of the heavens to his eye, if he knows something of Astronomy. It does not diminish his sense of the mystic meaning of a flower, if he has learned a little of Botany; or his appreciation of a gem, if he knows the laws of crystallization. Doubtless, in the course of the scientific investigation, poetic insight must be kept in the background. It cannot be present when scientific analyses are being carried on; but this is merely due to the intellectual necessity for some "division of labour," and because concentration on one phase or aspect of Nature is always necessary to its successful pursuit. At any and every point in the scientific process, and during every pause in the analysis, poetic

vision may and must come in, both to verify and to interpret the results of Science.

I know that there are some scientific men, who have the most vivid sense of the limits, as well as of the range of their own sphere of knowledge, and whose appreciation of poetry has been deepened by the very consciousness of these limits. There are others, however, like the late Mr Lewes, who wrote: "How insignificant is the existence of a thousand Ciceros in comparison with a single law of Nature!"

No extension of the territories of Science can ever push Poetry aside. The investigation of phenomena, and the discovery of new laws, invariably opens up fresh pathways for poetic labour. "Out of the eater comes forth meat, and from the destroyer sweetness." Science may occasionally disenchant old poetic theories, and change the character of our interpretation of Nature; but it can never supersede poetic work, because the tendency of modern culture is not towards uniformity, but rather towards an ever increasing complexity.

Besides, a time comes, after the most brilliant scientific discoveries are made, when their results are best expressed in Poetry. It is well known that poetry has often popularized Science, but poetry has a far higher office than this. It is needed to interpret the last results of science, because when we have got all our facts and laws together, we need an explanation of them different from that which science gives us. I must try to unfold this further.

The phenomena of Nature are not expressionless. They have *a language*—visible, audible, sensible—which their mere reduction to law does not exhaust. And the deepest meaning—both of the phenomena and their laws—is reached, not by the analysis of understanding, but by the synthesis of intuition. In other words, all phenomenal facts are the signs, or symbols, of a reality which underlies them; and it is through poetic insight, or intuition, that we get a glimpse of the things which they signify. It is somewhat remarkable that many of the old Greek realists of Ionia and elsewhere, who struck out new physical theories of the Universe, wrote down their ideas through the medium of poetry. So did Lucretius; and the physical theory of Pythagoras, Empedocles, and many others, was expressed and embodied in a poetic form.

It may even be said that every scientific discovery becomes, in course of time, fit material for poetic treatment. The theory of gravitation, the atomic theory, the glacial theory, the theory of evolution (in any of its forms) after they have been elaborated by the understanding, and demonstrated by a process of verification, after they have taken their place in the great structure of scientific thought, become—just as any important national event, or any great historical occurrence—fit subjects for the poet to deal with; and he deals with them, not as a recorder or chronicler, but as an interpreter. It is thus that the creations of the poet have more

individuality than those of the scientific investigator; and are, in consequence, more durable in the form in which they first arose. They are not superseded, as theories of Nature are superseded, by being taken up into the advancing current of the world's scientific thought. The most brilliant discoveries of Science are not only transcended, but they disappear in the new ones which succeed, and re-embody them; but the great poems of the world do not thus disappear. By this I do not mean that scientific discoveries are forgotten, or that their discoverers pass into oblivion; but that the particular frames of theory, in which scientific discoveries have been for a time embodied, disappear inevitably. It may be said that they are meant to disappear, when others more complete take their place.

To put the case otherwise, scientific thought is not individual, but general. Were it individual, or personal, it would not be scientific. It would be but the hypothesis of an individual mind; and all the individuality that enters into a scientific theory, when it is first advanced, disappears—and must disappear—so soon as the theory is taken up into the permanent building of the science of the world. There is nothing, for example, of the individuality of Sir Isaac Newton in the theory of Gravitation or of that of Charles Darwin in the theory of Evolution. But one of the conditions of immortality in any work of poetic genius is that it must be full of the individuality of its author. It is the individuality of the *Iliad*, of the *Divine Comedy*, of

Hamlet, of *Paradise Lost*, of *Faust*, of the lyrics of Burns and Wordsworth, that is at once the source of their charm, and the guarantee of their endurance.

It is thus that the prosaic facts—with which Science deals analytically—become poetic, when looked at not as they are in themselves, but as they are in relation to that larger unity, which they suggest or adumbrate. And while we get no *exact* knowledge from the poetic interpretation of Nature, we nevertheless get a deeper kind of knowledge, because it is more penetrative and suggestive, than anything disclosed to us by the dry light of Science. This may be put in a simple way by the half of an illustration.

Suppose you are standing near the Falls of Niagara on the Canadian shore, just at the edge of the great Horse-shoe Fall, and looking right into the heart of the mighty cauldron. There is perhaps no spot in the world—not excepting the grandest of Alpine peaks or passes—where Nature speaks more significantly, both to the scientific and to the poetic imagination. The geologist has much to learn from Niagara, as to the way in which that great trough—through which the St Lawrence river descends to lake Ontario—has been cut out in the course of the ages. Now, suppose that you could calculate, as Sir Charles Lyell tried to do, the precise number of millions of gallons of water precipitated over the fall per minute, or the precise rate at which the fall is annually receding, you would be adding something to your store of scientific knowledge; but, when you

had ascertained all the laws of matter and of motion, which are so grandly illustrated at Niagara, how far would you have got in the real interpretation of Nature? Suppose your inventory of all the natural forces and phenomena at work to be complete, and that you had reduced the whole within the domain of Science, you would be as yet only at the threshold of the interpretation of Nature; and the poet, or even your own æsthetic insight, could carry you much further in one direction, even without the science.

Suppose yourself standing where the whole volume of water from the Rapids above comes plunging forward; and those great unbroken ridges of green water hasten and bound forward, till they strike the underlying rocks, and are tossed into sheets of dazzling spray. You see the broad volume of the river at the crest of the precipice—where the column of solid water is estimated to be over thirty feet in thickness, and where it is over two thousand feet in breadth. The green of the upper current shades into a rich amber colour at the base, produced by the rock behind, till it breaks away in a single sheet of snow, and goes down into the unsunned abyss; whence rise the most delicate wreaths of spray, that are whirled by the wind into forms of aery loveliness, and tossed a thousand feet into the sky, through which—as a thin gauze veil—the sunlight streams. What gives its specialty to Niagara is, I think, the peculiar transparency both of the water, and of those wreaths of spray that

float up from the great cauldron, as natural incense skywards. And what it awakens in a sympathetic beholder is not a feeling of the beauty, or even the sublimity of Nature, but of its *glory*. No other word is adequate to express it. And if you add all the suggestions of multitudinous force and resistless energy, of continuity and patience, of serenity and repose allied to strength, and the marvellous music of the Fall—the harmony of all the different notes that ascend for ever from that natural orchestra,—who will venture to say that those suggestions, given forth by Nature at such a place, are to be set down as the mere idealizations of the mind that contemplates them, and not rather as disclosures of what lies within the physical framework, and behind the barrier of her laws.

The illustration might be made more effective for the present purpose by combining it with those revelations of Nature one occasionally meets with amid the high Alps of Europe, but one is as good as a hundred. And not even on Monte Rosa or the Matterhorn at daybreak, when the saffron and rosy lights of sunrise touched the snowfields with inexpressible loveliness, have I felt the apocalypse of Nature so rich as at the stupendous fall of Niagara. You cannot get away from it; you are magnetized and spell-bound by it.

And now I wish to ask whether the disclosure of the heart of Nature, occasionally made to us in the presence of such objects as the European Alps or Niagara, is not as far-reaching as the knowledge

which Science yields us. I do not ask which of the two interpretations is the higher, although I have my own belief upon the subject; but there is no use in arguing whether the scientific interpretation or the poetic vision of Nature is the deeper of the two, because each appeals more strongly to the mind that is constitutionally most in sympathy with it.

It is enough if they are seen to be co-ordinate. The knowledge of Nature which we get from Science is precise, definite, and clear; but it limits us by its precision, its definiteness, and its clearness. It fixes us among details. It detains, and sometimes hampers us, by a sense of arrestment. Poetic vision, on the contrary, gives us hints and suggestions of infinity. Opening up tracks which it does not pursue, but in which it leaves us to range at will, it invariably gives freedom, life, and movement.

Thus we may say in general that Science deals with the real, and tends to make its students realistic to the core; while Poetry rises to the ideal, and tends to raise its disciples more and more into the idealistic sphere. It lifts us above the actual, out of the region of mere facts events and laws, which is on the whole a prosaic region; but it does not carry us, as in a balloon, into cloudland. We do not take with it an aerial voyage into the mist, when we forsake the comparatively level road of scientific law. We pass, by poetic imagination, into a higher world of knowledge; and we find that when we have entered into this ideal sphere we are

nearer to reality, to the very core of existence, to the "last clear elements of things," than when we are fumbling amongst phenomena, or trudging along the lines of mere mechanical sequence.

Then, I must remark that the poetic or ideal interpretation of Nature, and the Universe—which is the complement and supplement to its scientific interpretation—comes out quite as much in the construction of the great ideal Philosophies, as in the great Poems of the world. It is seen quite as much in the philosophy of Plato and Plotinus, of Erigena, of Descartes, of Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, as it appears in the *Æneid*, *The Canterbury Tales*, in *King Lear*, in the *Intimations of Immortality*, or in *In Memoriam*.

We may perhaps get some further light on this subject, when we combine what has been already stated with the larger idea that all the knowledge we acquire by Science comes primarily from without — although, to convert the reports that reach us from without into knowledge proper, the mind must exert its own *a priori* power of arranging, comparing, grouping, classifying—whereas the source or spring of the knowledge we attain by poetic intuition lies within the soul itself. The more knowledge we get from without, the more is the mind of the knower dominated by it, I might even say subdued by it. But poetic intuition, which rises out of the depths of the soul and passes outwards, interpreting the scroll of Nature, does not dominate over us, as Science

does. It rather liberates us, and shows us that mind—if not superior to matter—is at any rate co-ordinate with it.

Poetry is thus continually restoring the balance between Man and Nature, which a one-sided Science is incessantly disturbing. Furthermore, the poetic glance, which pierces to the root of things, and is interpretative of that vast Reality which underlies all the shews of sense, rises from the actual to the ideal. Ever aspiring though not restless, its very existence and uprise within us is a sign that the actual is, and must be, unsatisfying; and so, it takes a constant although a calm and steady flight towards the ideal, at once above and within the actual. I think that Poetry may be regarded thus, in its noblest and deepest aspect, as the flight of the human soul beyond the realm of fact and law; not a lawless flight—for one of our own poets has told us that "nothing is that errs from law"—but as an expression of human effort to get beyond, and to rise above, the dominion of mere facts or events, in their law-ruled manifestations and phases. Its outcome is one evidence—and perhaps the highest expression—of the craving of the human soul for liberty, for emancipation from the fetters of custom, from the tyranny of tradition, from the weight of precedent, from the slavery of use and wont: in other words, it testifies to the perpetual need of fresh air, and for those aerial voyages of the imagination, which, starting from the real, rise to the ideal.

If, therefore, in reference to the emancipation of the human intellect, modern Science can say, "With a great price obtained I this freedom"—the price of ages of misrepresentation, misconstruction, obloquy, and also of struggle with repression from many quarters—Poetry may reply to her younger sister in the words, "But I was free-born": I was never in bondage to any of the facts or laws, which it is your function to investigate.

It is one of the happiest signs of our time—which is an era of extreme diffusion rather than concentration of culture, when knowledge is "running to and fro," and influencing unexpected quarters—that the old estrangements, intellectual moral and social, which our forefathers felt so keenly while labouring in different spheres of effort, are giving place to a more generous recognition of the worth of every branch of human culture, to a more genuine appreciation of the results obtained in each one of them, and of the merit of each worker who has contributed the smallest share to the result.

V

THE UNSEEN ROOT OF ETHICS

An ingenious set of writers maintain that Ethics is a wholly mundane science, that its basis lies in the simple facts of individual and social experience, that it requires no more and can attain to nothing higher, that outward authoritative law is not only unnecessary but is deceptive and pernicious, and that, in the mere impulses of our collective humanity, intellectual, emotional, and voluntary — each of these controlling the action of the rest—we find the true and the only root of duty. I wish to deal with this doctrine of dynamic force, accumulated in the individual, stored up there as the result of heredity, asserting itself in various ways, demanding realization, and pressing outwards from within. This glorification of impulse is a complete reversal of what has been the dominant note in the higher ethical thought of the world, although it is an old and familiar theory. Its advocates try to prove that the notions of law and duty, of absolute Imperatives, of external rules and commandments emanating from a moral source or centre, must all give place to the action and

reaction of those impulses, which alternately rise and fall within human nature; and that, if our Ethics are to be scientific, every idea of obligation must be discarded, and all metaphysical or theological law put aside as unverifiable, and quite useless in practice.

The question has often been discussed—can the laws of morality survive the complete decay of religious belief? It was argued with much acuteness, and from several points of view, in one of the modern intellectual "symposia," carried on in the columns of *The Nineteenth Century* twenty-four years ago, by Sir James Stephen, Lord Selborne, Dr Martineau, Mr Frederick Harrison, the Duke of Argyle, Professor Clifford and others. The controversy was interesting, but I do not purpose to return to it now. I prefer to deal with the ethics of a brilliant Frenchman recently deceased, M. Guyau, who held that the ideas both of external and internal law must be entirely laid aside by us, that all the ancient sanctions of morality are incorrect, and that the subjective forces of character, intellectual emotional and voluntary, are our only rule, the sole guide of life. Morality he taught would be more secure, and would continue to rule mankind not only when religion was a fossil, but when all ideas of law, order and sanction, the "imperatives" of duty, were extinct. Nay, the overthrow of the very notion of obligation he considered an indispensable preliminary to the morals of the future. The

structures reared by our predecessors on these great questions had all to be levelled with the dust; and our ancient ethical houses having been demolished, a new one was to be reared on the facts of experience and on these alone.

In his introduction M. Guyau criticizes the different attempts made in six separate ways, to justify obligation from the physical point of view. He then discusses the motive force of morality from a scientific point of view; and maintains that as intensity of life is the chief force at work in the world, the highest intensity demands the greatest expansion. He finds that the root of obligation lies in the sense of inward power or capacity. This is the true moral dynamic, the real spring of conduct—a purely earthborn impulse. But it is an impulse that tends away from the individual toward others, and is therefore not selfish. No obligation calls it forth. It is not prescribed by law. It simply flows forth from the individual toward others. Absolute duty is an illusion, all "categorical imperatives" deceive us.

Furthermore, there is no aim or purpose discernible in Nature, only the everlasting flux of Heraclitus. Hence there is no immortality for man. No life can survive, because all life is individuation for a time, which prepares the way for new individuation, and further change. Since there is no absolute rule of right, the laws of conduct may be quite different in other worlds from what they are here. A different kind of energy may

be demanded on a different planet. It is in the particular contingent things we have to do in this world, and in their relation to what surrounds us, that the morality of our action lies; and not in any abstract or formal obligation to act.

Having set aside the universal imperatives of Zeno and Kant, Guyau discards with equal emphasis every moral law based on or derived from theological ideas, and all obligations which are supposed to spring from an inward sense of duty. It is a mere superstition, quite as bad as idol worship, to reverence any duty arising from within. Putting all these aside, the intellectual and ethical room being cleared of lumber, Guyau proceeds to fill it with new contents. Here it may be allowed he is more successful, although the facts he adduces are not new, and are all consistent with the truth of the theories he discards. He starts with the fact that each individual has to pursue ends determined by his organization, and his ancestry, all of which tend to unity. The aim of the individual is "to maintain and enlarge his life," life in its most intense and manifold forms. That is the ultimate law of every living thing.

Now this, like so many other supposed novelties, is not new. It can scarcely be distinguished from the great Aristotelic law of unimpeded energy; although, the "enlarged hygiene" of modern science may have helped humanity to extend the range of its activities. Starting from this, the moral end for man, according to Guyau, is mere

activity of every possible kind. All kinds are good, if they leave room for others. There is in each one of us a vast store of undeveloped individual capacity, of conscious life and unconscious power, which should have some outlet or manifestation. It should pass away from self to others. Hence selfishness cannot be the true basis of morals. The individual cannot remain an isolated unit; his nature must tend toward that of others, and this secures enlargement of life and its multiplication. Guyau traces it in its threefold forms of fecundity of mind, fecundity of emotion, and fecundity of will.

But what is the corollary of this? If impulse is the root of Ethics and the highest morality is the fullest manifestation of every phase of intellect emotion and will, the only restraint coming from the action and reaction of these surging and warring forces — nothing can be validly condemned that has ever emerged on the field of history. Every force requires the presence of its opposite, and universal war being the law of the world, the most gigantic crimes might be justified. Guyau saw this, and not only were the acts of the Cæsars and of Napoleon justified to him by their results; but, from the fact that the forces were there, the inner impulses had their justification in their very outcome. "To upset the surface of the world," as Guyau put it, "with the object of impressing their mark upon it," would be quite justifiable to the men of mighty will; and it would

be useless to tell them that they had ignored the parallel forces of reason and feeling, because they might reply, "We have them not," "They are not ours"; and all that the moralist of the Guyau type could say in reply would be this, "You are a maimed individual, not so richly rounded into harmony as others are, because you have not been social."

This is the rock on which M. Guyau's theory suffers shipwreck. His maxim is "to have the power to act is to be obliged to act." "I can, therefore I must." Could Nero then be blamed, or any other incarnate fiend who has ever possessed the power? If, "to feel within you the greatest that you are capable of doing" be "really the consciousness of what it is your duty to do," it is inevitable that the still small voice of duty will be silenced by the loud clamour of passion and of crime. It is true, and was nobly said by Guyau, that life can maintain itself only on the condition of diffusing itself, but what is to teach the individual this altruism? and the necessary restraint upon himself which it implies? Is it to come only from the inflow and the outflow of impulse? Is the magnet to be found within the personality of others? or, is the dynamic power to emanate from a source that is above as well as beyond, and yet within the individual?

And now I reach "the Unseen Root of Ethics." It seems to me that those moralists are right who tell us that, underlying the ethical sphere is that of Religion; Religion, not conventionally understood,

but in the sense in which a great poet realized it, when he spoke of Duty as the

Stern daughter of the voice of God.

I agree with those who say that Ethics must survive, that the eternal laws of conduct will remain unassailable, even although Religion be for a time discarded; or at least those forms in which it has occasionally clothed itself. But I not only find in Religion the goal of Ethics and its crown, but also —and we must both think and speak by the help of metaphor—its root.

That root is for the most part wholly unseen. Its presence is unconscious to the individual. The root does not come into visible display, while the stem and the branches are to be seen growing on the tree of human life; but it is always present, universal and aboriginal; else the root, stem, and branches could neither exist nor flourish. It is the existence of the Universal Will, that is "in us yet not of us,"—at one and the same time our highest self in its highest manifestation and exercise, and the supreme authoritative Lawgiver within us—that is the root of Ethics. Obviously the notions we entertain as to the nature of the Universe in which we live must have a definite bearing on our theory of conduct, and on the rules of life which we adopt. If we believe that this world is ruled by two adverse powers of light and darkness, or that it is intrinsically a realm of evil, our conduct is certain to be different from what it will be if we

believe it to be pervaded by, and to be under the direction of a single beneficent Power.

It is therefore evident that morality is influenced by religious belief, while the practices of the race have invariably suffered from its deterioration or decline. That is a historical fact which cannot be gainsaid. On the other hand, the sense of duty, the conviction that we are under law, is inherent in our constitution, indigenous to it, and imperative in its utterances, although not unvarying in its verdicts. I believe that we find the explanation of the fact that human nature is "under authority," only in the existence of an extra-human, extra-mundane Presence, which, as the Hebrews put it, "besets us before and behind, and lays its hand upon us."

Let us suppose that the adult morality of the world has arisen from obscure sources, that it has grown out of the rudimentary guesses of our ancestors, we are surely bound to take the latest and the highest—not the earliest and the crudest—as our leading guide; while we cannot place all of them on the same level of importance. Some one has said that morals are "anonymous in their origin"; another, that they are autochthonous; a third, that there are "no azoic" (*i.e.* lifeless) "rocks in the sphere of ethics." The anonymity may be conceded, if the source whence the relatively mature products of to-day have come, be a real and living fountain-head; and if it be admitted that we have some light as to its characteristics. But, if we are entirely ignorant as to our whence

and whither, the rules of action which happen to sway us at any particular period, being provisional and transient ones, can have very little authority.

I am of opinion that the laws of conduct are indigenous to Human Nature, only because that nature is a mirror of the Divine; or—to use more ancient and accustomed words—because man exists "in the image of God." But the discernment of this underlying element in our moral consciousness, which unites the finite with the Infinite, and connects the individual with the All, is not always possible. It is a rare apocalypse. The speculative warrant of our highest truths comes to us only when we are on the mountain-tops of evidence; but, then and there it is that we are able to transcend the boundaries of Time and Space, to get beyond phenomena, and to "see into the life of things." The Divine within the human is the unseen root of Ethics, the "suppressed premiss" of all our higher life, and without it we drift on the vague ocean of moral probability, without rudder chart or compass. Thus it seems to me that the first thing which comes into the ethical sphere from one above it, and which — having entered in, becomes its root—is the belief in an infinite moral Source which is divine; and the second is an ethical corollary of the first, viz. the lasting issues of our conduct here; in other words, the immortality of the individual. When these twin convictions are absent, both the root and the superstructure of morality are changed.

VI

THE CORRELATION OF THE MORAL FORCES

In discussing the question of the correlation of the moral forces, I start from what may be assumed as a demonstrated doctrine, viz., the convertibility of the physical ones. The interchangeability of these forces is one of the conclusions of modern science, equal in importance to the doctrine of Evolution—to which it is closely kindred—and equal in evidence to the law of Gravitation.

The first question I put is this: Is it legitimate to infer, from the above scientific axiom, the convertibility of all force? and, from the unity of the material and the mental forces, their ultimate identity?

In answer, I think it is not: for the obvious reason that the chasm between the physical and the vital has not yet been bridged by Science; and although Speculative Philosophy has tried from the time of the Eleatics to throw a plank across it, in its doctrine of unity-minus-difference, neither Parmenides nor Plotinus, neither Erigena

nor Spinoza nor Hegel (to take representative names from successive schools and periods), has proved to the satisfaction of the philosophical world that monism of this type is the last word in Metaphysics. I therefore set aside the question as to whether the physical, the vital, and the conscious forces can be unified. Embraced within a single category of thought, and labelled by the common name of "Force,' they can, of course, be easily talked of as one; but there certainly remains a fundamental trinity within that unity, and it is enough for my present purpose to say that the question—both as a scientific and as a ontological one—is still *sub judice.*

Let us, then, provisionally assume—without going into either the metaphysics or the physics of the controversy—that there are three realms of force, which have not yet been reduced to unity by the rigour of speculative reason, or by the experiential and inductive proofs of science: (1) the sphere of the physical forces, which are all interrelated, and convertible *inter se;* (2) the realm of the vital force or forces; and (3) the sphere of self-conscious and volitional force, in which intellectual elements blend with moral ones. Let us suppose that there is no discovered track, which is also a transit-path, between these several realms or spheres; but only the bridge of a common name. What may be suggested as highly probable is this: that as, in the first of the three spheres, the doctrine of interchangeability is now almost as

clearly demonstrated as is the law of natural selection, it may be concluded, by analogy, that it is the same in the two other realms; and, therefore, that all life is radically and organically one, and that all self-conscious energy—mental, moral, and volitional—is, at its root, the same.

Adequately to discuss the first of these corollaries, one would require to be familiar with data, on which only experts have a right to speak. The question of the germ-theory of life, and of disease, must be left to specialists in biology and physics. The problem now raised is much narrower. It refers to the sphere of consciousness alone, or, perhaps, it should rather be said, to the field of Human Nature alone. Within that sphere, there are both conscious and sub-conscious states; and, in the field of consciousness, there may be a further limitation of the problem, viz., to the moral area of experience. Within this sub-section, we may examine the springs of conduct *seriatim*, and their outcome in character: that we may see whether they are originally one—howsoever different their developed phases may be, and whether we may conclude that they are all convertible *inter se*.

In discussing it, it is scarcely necessary to say that the old notion of "faculties" as separate powers of human nature, is given up by every modern psychologist. It was a convenient way of naming and differentiating certain aspects of energy in consciousness, to speak of them as faculties; but the

idea of our being endowed with separate and independent powers—of sense, memory, imagination, reason, feeling, and will—is no longer tenable.

It is more congenial work, however, to try to raise the down-trodden reputation of a discarded theory—and to shew the truth from which it sprang—than, in a combative mood, to expose the error to which it gave rise; and this old doctrine of the faculties was only a pictorial, and somewhat picturesque, way of stating an undoubted truth in reference to those phases of activity, which differ so greatly in their outcome, although their origin may be the same. Whether the intellectual and the moral powers are one at their root, and have grown out of something wholly unlike their present state, is a question we need not raise. It might rather enhance the wonder of their origin, than detract from their present greatness, if we had valid evidence that there was but one "rock whence they were hewn," and one "pit out of which they were dug"; since, in their present multitudinousness and variety, they are the phases of a single *ego*, which is the residuum at the basis of all energy in man. This, however, would not prove their interchangeability. The determination of the latter question is one both for Psychology and for Metaphysic: and perhaps its solution will be easier, after we have settled the minor question of the interchangeability of the moral forces, and the unity of the realm to which these forces belong.

It is not necessary, with a view to its solution, that we have a list of the several virtues, drawn out on perfectly adequate psychological lines. We may take any list—the Platonic, the Aristotelian, the Stoic, the Zoroastrian, the Buddhist, the Christian—or a perfectly miscellaneous one, such as the following—Courage, Temperance, Candour, Liberality, Friendship, Magnanimity, Honour, Justice, Courtesy, Tenderness, Chivalry, Humility, Grace. It would be quite possible to go on dividing and sub-dividing, or mingling and interchanging the virtues, till we had—instead of those mentioned—ten times their number; and yet each would seem different from the rest, owing to the circumstances in which it has to be exercised, or the objects which respectively call it forth. Thus diverse in character and outcome, they may nevertheless be all one in origin, the varying phases of a single virtue in its separate modes of manifestation; just as the chemical and physical forces—heat, light, electricity, etc.—are the separate modes of a single protean power.

In helping us to answer the question now raised, the evolution of the moral sense, within historical experience, is an all-important element. It has been affirmed that all the virtues which have arisen are the result of the efforts of man to increase and multiply his own resources, and the resources and possibilities of his race; self-maintenance, and race-maintenance—in the wildest and richest sense of the terms—having been the motive

forces at work in the evolution of his powers, and therefore in the gradual deferentiation of his faculties. If this be a warrantable position to take up, it will abolish the controversy between the egoists and the altruists, by vindicating each; and by shewing that both tendencies—the centripetal and the centrifugal—were at work from the first, under many disguises and *aliases*.

It may be noted that the want of any explicit link of connection between the developed products, or the wide chasm which may seem to separate them now, is no evidence against a common parentage. Suppose that one particular virtue has been in active exercise for a time—or that the generic virtue of self-maintenance and race-maintenance has been working in one particular channel—it is inevitable that it must intermit its energy for a period. Every virtue exhausts itself, by its very activity and strength. In fact, it is never quite the same, during any two successive moments of experience; and when it reasserts itself, after temporary rest, it does so with the alliance of other elements, which it has received both by inheritance and by contagion. It therefore appears, of necessity, in a different guise from that which it formerly assumed. Not only is the same virtue—supposing the virtues to be separate and independent—changed in character at each new period in which it is exercised, so that *e.g.* Courage, Temperance, and Courtesy differ in a boy, in a young man, in one in middle life, and in an old man; but when

the virtues reappear in the field of consciousness, they come back blent with many elements that were not there before. They are inevitably altered "for better for worse, for richer for poorer." The distant inheritances of character—which reach us from paternal and maternal sources—shew themselves, now in this peculiarity of action or demeanour, and again in that; but it is always the same moral *ego* that is developing, and differentiating itself, in these successive experiences.

As a new element in the case we must not overlook the sudden, and curiously strong, reactions that occur in moral experience. How are we to explain these? The rapid development of a virtue, which seems the opposite of all that had gone before it, in the character which exemplifies the change; *e.g.* a selfish nature becoming generous, or a cynic hopeful, or a sot comparatively temperate. It is not that the old tendency has wrought itself out, and satiety followed, determining reaction the other way; it is rather that a reaction in experience, and a return to a truer and healthier view of conduct, prove that the underlying force in character is one and the same.

In this connection it should be noted that ethical lessons are very seldom taught directly. A certain result is produced, by passing through an ordeal which has been keen or arrowy—say a great disaster, or an experience of wrong. Its effect may at first be unperceived, because it is

occult and subterranean, working inward; but the original moral force may reappear afterwards as a new virtue of a totally different kind—as distinct as light is from heat, or as both are from electricity.

It is too obvious to require illustration that, given a moral agent, with a certain character and subject to certain conditions, a particular class of virtues will be evolved; and that, given the same agent, with the same character and different conditions, a different set of virtues will be evolved. If this be admitted as a matter of fact, the corollary is that the motive force, which in the main regulates conduct, and differentiates the virtues, comes from within; and that, this dynamic source or seat of the virtues being one, the virtues themselves may be traced back on the last analysis to a common root.

Another point to be noticed is that destructive agencies are at work in the moral world, which are correlated with the productive or constructive ones, to further the general weal. This suggests, remotely if not nearly, the unity of the virtues. Every one knows how elaborate are the contrivances in the realm of Nature to inflict pain, injury, ruin, and death, among the organisms underneath man. But this arrangement, by which

> Nature, red in tooth and claw,

destroys its weaker physical specimens, is paralleled in the equally elaborate plan by which the weaker members of the human race are crushed aside,

after much suffering, defeat, neglect, and loss. It is part of a destructive process, operative in the cosmos, and which has probably always existed in it. Alongside of this, however, there is a constructive process at work—a strictly conservative force, sometimes evolved out of the other by reaction. This new force enters the arena, "not to destroy, but to fulfil"; but, whilst it does so, its mode of working seems an evidence of the unity of all the moral forces, of their interchangeability, and almost of their ubiquity.

The doctrine of the unity of the virtues is an old one in the literature of Philosophy. Its germs are to be found in the Vedas, and in Buddhism. It became explicit in the Zend-Avesta. Zoroaster unified the good and the evil principles, in two great areas, or diametrically-opposed spheres of action. Socrates—to pass over earlier Greek writers—held that all virtue was one, and had its root in knowledge; while the Cynics, and the Stoics, more emphatically, announced the same theory. In Stoicism the doctrine exploded in a series of paradoxes, such as that if a man possessed a single virtue he possessed all the virtues. Virtue to the Stoics was an indivisible, homogeneous, inelastic, organic whole. Either you had it all, or you had it not at all. There was no state half-way between a virtue and a vice, and no middle place between no virtue and all the virtues. Rudimentary, developing, and evolving virtue was not understood by the Stoics; and, in consequence,

there were no "degrees of comparison" in their view of moral excellence. Hence the arbitrary division of mankind into two classes, as sharply marked as in the ethics of Zoroaster; and hence the further paradox that the good do nothing evil, and the bad do nothing good; that all good actions are equally good, all evil ones equally evil—no distinction between faults and crimes being recognized. In short, there was no *scale* in Stoicism, either of virtue or of vice. But, with this forgotten scale recognized, the truth out of which the Stoic paradoxes sprang must not be forgotten; and, if adequately understood, this ancient doctrine of the unity of the virtues, and their convertibility, may be one of the most powerful incentives to their pursuit in the modern world. If one may legitimately believe that the moral excellence, after which he strives in vain, is nevertheless an integral element in the nature he inherits, and therefore a latent possibility of his life—*only requiring the removal of existing hindrance, and the presence of some magnet, to draw them forth*—there is a large amount of good cheer in the prospect. The possibility of dormant virtues springing into activity, or of dull ones being quickened by transference, adds a new interest to the moral life, and its aspiration after unrealized ideals.

The evidence which experience gives of the indestructibility of the moral forces tends towards the same result. No morally good act ever dies. It perpetuates itself, in other forms, as well as

after its own likeness. As Browning represents Abt Vogler saying :—

> There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;
> The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;
> What was good, shall be good ; with, for evil, so much good more.

The correlation of the moral forces may thus be seen, in personal experience ; but the same conclusion may be reached from a study of the way in which they operate in society at large. If moral life in the individual be fundamentally and organically one, it is so *à fortiori* in society ; where many units combine to forward the general weal, by co-operation and inter-communication. All the social forces are *solidaires*. The energy which enthusiasts possess, in collectively working out a great cause, is just the sum of the energy of the individuals who compose the group ; but whilst they combine to effect a common end, they all differ *inter se*. The moral force at work in the organization is composite ; but it works to a single end. The energy which each unit brings, into what may be called the commonwealth of the forces, while it is different from that which every other brings, is at the same time convertible into it ; and the special form it assumes is often a matter of apparent chance or accident. That which, in a particular profession, becomes a force tending to the strength of that profession would—if its author had entered on a different calling—

have differentiated itself accordingly, and gone to increase the sum-total of energy, in labour of another kind.

If it seems difficult to carry out this principle in reference to the race at large, it may be noted that between the individual and the race there lies the nation; and that the solidarity and convertibility of national forces may be obvious when those of the race are less patent to the eye.

VII

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY: FRANCE AND THE TRANSVAAL

The ethical thesis which I put before you is this, that if we are individually responsible for our conduct, there must also be a corporate responsibility for men and nations; that there is a national as well as an individual conscience. In other words, if the units in the body corporate are accountable for what they do, and what they are, the aggregates of which they form the parts—that is to say, Society and the Nation—are no less responsible for what they do and become, by the joint action of their component members. This proposition may be considered by some to be too trivial for statement, and too elementary for proof; nevertheless it is constantly ignored, even by prominent representatives of public opinion.

All stable Governments have taken good care that individuals shall be held responsible for their actions. If they contravene the unseen laws of conduct, the State does not interfere, although their contravention of these laws always finds

them out; but, if they break the laws which are the safeguard of social order and security, they are at once dealt with as offenders. Many think, however, that it is only the units in a nation who are responsible; and that the State, or social organism, is merely a collection of units. In opposition to this atomistic view of society, my aim is to shew that responsibility belongs to nations in their corporate capacity, to organizations as well as to units; and to indicate some of the results which follow from ignoring it.

It is easy to see that to the vast majority within each nation corporate responsibility, as a fact of conscious experience, is impossible. Individuals are necessarily absorbed with the details of their special work, in the midst of which they often hardly recognize their accountability as units. But those who are elected to lead and to guide the masses, those chosen by suffrage to represent them, must—if they are worthy of such choice—recognize the existence of a social and national, as well as of an individual conscience. They must understand that their temporary position in office does not lessen their responsibility; but adds to, and enhances, it indefinitely. Thus, to take instances; those who are Town or County Councillors, Members of Parliament, the Clergy, Schoolmasters, University Officials, Directors of Companies, Managers of Trusts, Judges, Cabinet Ministers, are each and all—because of their election to these varied posts—invested with new

responsibilities, which are the unalienable and permanent duties of office. Very much as a parent is face to face with new obligations, so soon as he becomes the head of a household for which he has to live and labour, and the honour of which he has to advance; when a Nation has passed through a period of adolescence and reached that of manhood, new duties arise, which are the higher obligations of maturer years, in other words, corporate responsibilities.

This is obvious enough on the surface, but the idea in connection with it on which special emphasis should be thrown is that, when this particular stage is reached in the history of a Nation, or of any organized association of units within it—any club, or profession, or guild—moral obligation is increased. A second and a new kind of responsibility is added. Now, it is a curious although an obvious fact, in the history of the world, that this corporate responsibility is often totally disregarded. Many when chosen for office seem to think that their election gives them additional freedom of action, almost irresponsible action. They regard their new position as a sort of protective shield, under which they may act independently, cut off from the scrutiny of other eyes than their own; and so, gigantic wrongs have been committed, by members of corporations and clubs, to which the light of day has not penetrated at once. Managers of Trust Companies, Bank Directors, sometimes even Nations themselves—through their Courts

or Cabinets—have inflicted terrible wrongs on individuals which have remained hidden for a time.

If a case occurs in which it is impossible to get justice done in the Law Courts of a country—more especially at a Court-martial—or another in which the Outlanders of a Republic are practically ostracized, and crushed under a tyranny that is both unjust and cruel, what is to be done? In answer, it may be affirmed that if the corporate conscience of a nation is dead, that nation deserves first of all the grave remonstrance of public opinion within it; next the rebuke of other nations; and, if it will not listen to the remonstrance and rebuke, it then deserves repudiation. Doubtless, the evidence must be ample, if not overwhelming, before such condemnation takes place; but if all the countries of the World stand aghast at the want of justice, the collapse of a sense of corporate responsibility in a land which used to boast of its ancient spotless honour, what conclusion can be drawn but that there is some extraordinary moral decay at work; and the effect of such decay, on the lives of many individuals within it, must be stupendous. For a supreme judicial Court to allow an innocent man to suffer years of infamy and misery to screen the conduct of others high in rank is a procedure fraught with the utmost peril to the land in which it occurs; while it shews that, for the time being, there is a disease within the national heart.

You see to what I refer in these sentences.* In our time there has been no object-lesson on the subject of corporate responsibility at all comparable to that which France has afforded in the recent "Affaire Dreyfus." But the condemnation of that innocent Jew has not only touched the heart of the whole civilized world, but it has brought those who condemned him to a low level amongst contemporary nations. Prejudice, race-hatred, and jealousy have crushed aside—almost stifled—the instincts of justice, and have led army-generals to condemn a just man, very much as happened at the commencement of the Christian era. The sense of righteousness—that righteousness which exalteth a people—becomes almost extinct within the military caste of one of the great nations of the world; when it is openly alleged that it is better for a blameless individual to suffer, than for those in the army who did the wrong to be proved to be guilty, and be condemned. That the real culprits, the traitors and betrayers of the nation, should be shielded for the supposed benefit of the class to which they belong is an absolute reversal of the primary canons of morality, by those who were placed in office to maintain them.

And this is the point of chiefest interest to the whole world outside France, as well as to those — that grand minority of noble-minded and righteous men within its border—who have fought so valiantly for truth and justice. It has

* This address was delivered in the autumn of 1898.

afforded a lesson, and it may yet afford a more lasting one, on the principles of righteous conduct. The French nation has suffered temporary degradation in the eyes of the world by the perversion of justice, but this may perhaps result. From the noble defences made by two of the ablest of modern lawyers, the courage of one or two of the army-generals themselves, and the zeal of one great novelist, the country to which they belong may be awakened to a new sense of its responsibilities, and may recover its former honoured place amongst the nations by the force of moral reaction.

Now, take another case, which gives us a second contemporary object-lesson. If the majority within a Republic is, for the time being, colour-blind by prejudice as to the merits, not of a single individual within its borders, but of another race which forms the majority of its population; if that Republic tyrannizes over those who have come into it from other lands, and subjects them to disabilities, insults, grievances, and injustice, the country whence the larger number of these settlers came, which has also large bordering territories of its own — territories threatened by the lawlessness and mal-practices which prevail—may justly interpose on the ground of the paramount rights of mankind, and the corporate responsibility of the nations composing it, and may insist on the redress of these wrongs. Here, as in the former case of France, you see at once that the reference is to South Africa and the Transvaal. Well, we find

it said, and said plausibly, by many advocates of an ultra-radical independence amongst the nations, that no country has a right to interfere with any other in the management of its affairs; and that as an individual is free to act as he pleases, a nation may do as it likes with its own. But, however plausible, that is only true if they both do justly; and, if a nation does unjustly, there are but two alternatives open to it. It may be left outside the pale of civilization; or, if it desires to be recognized by others in the great confederacy of nations, it must be compelled to put in practice the universal world-wide virtue of Justice.

A country recognized as independent of its neighbours may be allowed to take the first alternative, if it prefers isolation. If it elects to defy the general consent of the nations, and declines to adopt a policy of even-handed justice within its borders, it may do so; but only so long as it does not inflict injury on the honest members of another race, encouraged by its own Government to live within it. If it tries to grow richer by unjust action towards those who have helped it to become rich—if it tramples upon them, treats them as aliens, and inflicts all manner of disabilities upon them—a time comes when active intervention is necessary; and it is necessary, not only for the oppressed Outlander and the redress of grievances which have become intolerable, but for the maintenance of the corporate responsibility of the world, and for the honour of mankind at large.

The precise method of interference is another matter, but when the resources of diplomacy are spent those of civilization are not exhausted. On this latter subject we need not enter. It is enough if we see, in the light and by the aid of these contemporary facts, that every Nation of the World has, or ought to have, *a national conscience;* and that in its corporate capacity it is not less but more responsible than the individual is. It comes to this, that a Nation which does not respect and honour Law, exalting it above all selfish aggrandizement, is in a state of moral decay, whatever its successes or achievements in other directions may be; and that if it persists in the practices of injustice and tyranny, a point is reached when interference with it becomes necessary for the sake of the world at large, as well as of the weak and the oppressed within itself. Furthermore, that as the units in each nation are bound to respect and obey the laws of the realm, if the majority of any people—in a temporary fit of frenzy—ignore justice and defy the law the minority, who are loyal to the principles of morality, are those who truly represent the nation, and even constitute it.

VIII

PRACTICAL ETHICS

A THEORY of Morals has the closest possible relation to the conduct of Life, and the discovery of a speculative ground of action, or a theoretic ideal of duty, has no relevancy or meaning apart from its realization by the Individual and by Society. If our aim, in the Philosophy of Ethics, be the discovery of a true theory of practice, our main endeavour—after we have found it—should be the practice of the theory, because the possession of what Mr Mill happily called "a moral nautical almanac" is of no use to any one, unless he can actually steer the vessel of his life according to the directions given in the almanac.

It need hardly be said that to act wisely in this world action must be the result of insight, and that insight must be wide, varied, and thorough; but there are various kinds of insight, and that which leads to inaction, or sits apart, "holding no form of creed, but contemplating all," may entail a greater loss than gain to the individual and to the world.

During the earlier years of life the practical side of experience is not usually esteemed so highly as

the theoretical. This is natural and inevitable; but when these earlier years are passed, or are passing,—when a career has to be chosen and pursued,—more especially when one is at the "parting of the ways," where cross-roads meet, and it depends on the track he takes what the future of his life is to become—the practical side begins to get its due. Again, when the intellectual defects of all the systems of belief are realized, and the vast number of *lacunæ* or unsolved problems is taken into account—problems which remain to baffle us after our analytic investigations are closed, and our further syntheses are reached, we are perhaps better able to estimate at their true value the conclusions we may come to in the verifiable sphere of conduct. It is a region over which our speculative theories must sweep, but with which they need never practically interfere; it is one upon which mists occasionally settle, but which they invariably leave to the clear sunshine and the light of day.

In giving a sample of some of the points which would be discussed in a full course of practical Ethics, a single prefatory remark may be made in reference to them as a whole—viz. this, that every phrase of practical virtue has the closest point of contact with every other. Man being a moral unity, they may all be interpreted, from different points of view, as the varying aspects of one and the same radical virtue, which undergoes constant transformation and redintegration.

In arranging these practical virtues, I follow no systematic order; but, if we may roughly divide them, first into duties towards self, or duties connected with the estimate of self and the regulation of the personal character, and secondly into duties towards others or connected with the estimate of others, then the first five will belong to the former class, and the remaining three to the latter.

The *first* in the list is that great and radical virtue of *having a root in one's self*, to which in various ways almost every moralist refers. Now, at the outset it is most important that we see the intellectual ground whence this moral virtue springs. It is the conviction that the individual is something more than a mere link in the chain of Nature, that in virtue of his personality and personal identity each one of us is a centre, or focus, at which the scattered rays of moral relationship to others meet. If, at our birth, we are not mere waves rising out of the sea of being, and at our decease sinking back into the ocean of forgetfulness—if it is not true that we are only "such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep," if we have natures above Nature, as well as within it—and if our *alter ego* is capable of being acted upon by the Infinite *from within*, so that our highest self in its most exalted exercise is the action of the Divine within us,—if this be a fact, or series of facts, in the conscious life of the human race, it must impart a new sense of personal worth or value to the individual. It will develop a

feeling of independence to the blows of fate, of superiority to the chance accidents of the hour, a sense (for we must speak figuratively) of rootedness and groundedness in what is at once durable and infinite.

The practical outcome of this is a certain self-sufficience, which is totally different from every phase of self-sufficingness, and which, when true and genuine, does not lead to pride in any of its phases, but only to self-reliance. The stupendous fact which gives rise to this moral self-reliance is one which humbles the individual, as much as it exalts him; and it does so in the very act of exalting him. The fact is this: that the humanity of each member of our race is, at one and the same time, within Nature and above it, and that, although indissolubly involved in the sequences of the physical world, we are, as one of our poets puts it:—

> A lasting link in Nature's chain,
> From highest heaven sent down.

Now, to tell a young person that self-sufficience is a virtue, and that the cultivation of it is a duty, may seem like opening up a very superfluous pathway towards conceit, if not opinionativeness. Rightly understood, however, it is the very reverse; because the practical side of the truth just mentioned is not self-satisfaction, but self-command; not self-elation, but self-control; not self-gratification, but self-superintendence.

The virtue I speak of arises out of a discernment

of the true nature of man, as a being with faculties and affinities which link him with the Infinite, and within whom the Infinite may work. The recognition of that fact—if it be a fact—develops a second consciousness, which both elevates and humbles; and which leads, at one and the same time, to self-development and self-control. This virtue may be connected with the nobler part of the teaching of the Greek sages, from Socrates to the Stoics, and even the Epicureans. The "living according to Nature," and yet above Nature, the "following right Reason," the "pursuit of inward harmony," all take their rise in the recognition of what the moral self is; and of how it is open, on the one hand to the world in which we live, and on the other to the Infinite whence we have come, and whence we may all be inspired. So much for the first of the practical virtues.

What I set down as the *second* in the list may seem far removed from the first, but it is in reality very closely akin to it. It is that of *openness to all influence that is elevating, invigorating, and healthful.* This, from another point of view, is the virtue of candour, dispassionateness, or single-eyedness. It is equivalent to the directness of soul, that is free from prejudice, twist, or bias. It implies a readiness to receive impressions which lift our consciousness up to higher levels. It includes a willingness to be taught, and a docile attitude under the guidance of what is loftier than ourselves. It is a virtue which has many

aspects or phases, which may perhaps be more apparent if we contrast it with its opposite vice,—viz. the assumption that one is wiser than other people, and does not need instruction from without; or that, if not sufficiently wise, it will not do to let others imagine that one is not so, and that *they* have anything very important to impart in the way of influence or teaching. This latter is the vice of inordinate self-esteem, and it is curious how inveterate it occasionally is, how it clings to some people who are otherwise excellent, and seems to grow stronger as they grow older.

Sometimes, in proportion to the amount of intellectual power possessed, and the force of character which works on others, there is a want of openness to their peculiar views, and even an arrogant air that is ready to impose favourite views with the strength and tenacity of the partisan. Some persons always have their shibboleth, whether of orthodoxy—*i.e.* of what alone it is right to believe—or of good manners—*i.e.* of what it is the correct social form to do; or it may be a political shibboleth—of what alone can lead a nation to prosperity, or of what is certainly leading it to destruction—and they test everything *by* their shibboleth, so that they never grow any wiser, but worship their fetish till they die. Some of them, moreover, have a very unlovely habit of obtruding their shibboleth on other people. They assume the hard style of the Roman infallibilist, or the doctrinaire style of

the old-world parish dominie, or the arrogant one of the modern "emancipated person," and thrust their ideas upon other people. They sometimes even try to put others down by self-assertion, preferring to brush them aside rather than be themselves examples of noble thought and generous feeling.

One cure for this very common tendency—which sometimes destroys a character, taking all loveliness out of it, and which also does much social mischief—is just the cultivation of that openness of soul, or candour towards new ideas and new influences, with the Socratic conviction all dominant that what we chiefly know is our own ignorance, and our need of further knowledge. Here, as elsewhere, true wisdom lies midway between a perpetual openness to all impressions,—and a consequent pliability of spirit which can be twisted in any direction,—and the self-assertion, rigidity, and conceit, that will not admit the need of any modification of belief, or any new practical influence from without.

The *third* virtue is that of *an earnest purpose in life*, the sense of having a serious function to fulfil and a duty to discharge in this world; in other words, the conviction that we are here not merely for the purposes of enjoyment, not born for pleasure only or for excitement, but for the accomplishment of great ends, which are up-bound with our existence as intellectual and moral agents, whatever our sphere of labour or pursuit may be. It will

be seen that this item in practical ethics has a close relation to the theory of morals; and that, if it is explicitly borne witness to by our practical instincts, it modifies—if it does not contradict—the one-sided theory of utilitarian happiness so much in vogue.

The nobility and glory of fruitful work have been taught us by many strong voices lately silent, notably by Carlyle. We may also recall a sentence in *Aurora Leigh:*

> Work, work, work,
> 'Tis better than what you work to get.

The same poet said, in a noble sonnet—

> What are we sent to earth for? Say to toil,
> Nor seek to leave the tending of thy vines
> For all the heat o' the day till it declines,
> And death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.
> God did anoint thee with His odorous oil
> To wrestle, not to reign.

The precise point to be realized in this connection, is the extraordinary expansion which it gives to human character, and the consequent enlargement of all the aims of life, when we realize that,—in virtue of our own personality and its relation to the Infinite—we are here to add a little to that great structure of noble human work which is being definitely accomplished within the lives of other people, work which will survive when the workers have passed away and are forgotten; in other words, that we live to transmit influence (the influence of life on life),

to be architects of character, by however slow a process and in however slight a degree. To go through life with that aim paramount, not so much ambitious of professional success, or outstripping others in the social race, as of taking a noiseless and unostentatious part in the building up of character, in the perpetuation of pure and elevating influence,—that is one of the noblest of human aims, and one of the grandest of possible achievements. It is a moral result that is open to all of us; and its realization, even in a slight and partial manner, has a wonderful effect, in the majority of cases, in tranquillizing human life, as well as making it fruitful. It subdues that restlessness which is the chief enemy of joy, as well as of attainment. So much for the third virtue in our list.

The *fourth* virtue, which is in closest harmony with the third,—though some would think it far removed, — is one which Aristotle would have called an intellectual rather than a moral excellence. It is the effort to attain to some kind of *unity or harmony in our personal life.* By this is not meant an effort to reach ideal completeness, but such a practical harmony that, amid the diverse aims and interests which may be properly ours, we do not feel the sense of discord arising within us. The intellectual root on which this virtue reposes is the conviction that all our activities, whether directed towards the True, the Beautiful, or the Good, should meet at a focus and there be

harmonized. This is much less frequently attained than many imagine. It is a real achievement, for example, when one, whose life is devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, finds that its pursuit blends quite harmoniously with all his social duties, without any hitch or jar, and unites his professional toil in a natural manner with the humbler and commoner work which fills up the interspaces of life.

Perhaps there is no better safeguard than that which this virtue affords in preventing men from indulging in any one thing, or in any kind of effort, to excess. If a particular pursuit cannot be harmonized with other ends, which a rational being is called upon to accomplish, he or she may be sure that it ought to be restrained or discontinued. They may take it for granted that it is alien to that unity which is the one end both of individual and of social life.

Another result of the endeavour to reach unity and harmony, both amongst one's convictions and aims, is this; that it checks partisanship of every kind. Almost every one who enters on a practical pursuit with any ardour, enters it of necessity as a partisan. He therefore over-magnifies it, and sometimes comes to look on his particular line of effort as the noblest in the world. It is a natural illusion, and it often does undoubted good, by giving energy and enthusiasm in work; but it leads to corresponding evils,—*e.g.* the evils of coterieism, or sectarian views of life,—to class-

prejudices and the feelings of caste. It thus happens that the most earnest advocates of special lines of labour usually fail to see the good that is being achieved by thousands beyond their own department. The habit of striving after unity and harmony in all things (the virtue now under consideration) is more likely than any other to counteract, if not to checkmate it, and it is a virtue which should be specially cultivated before professional life is begun; because the discernment, at that stage, of the organic unity to which all genuine human labour tends—or may tend—should check the spirit of partisanship, and lessen the force of professional bias in after-life.

We now reach a virtue which seems to need special emphasis laid upon it in the nineteenth century. It is that of *reverence, and of a reverential habit of mind.* By this is not meant the practice of any act of religious observance. Such acts belong to another province than the ethical. What is now referred to is the characteristic of "high seriousness," to which Matthew Arnold referred as a distinctive feature in all the greatest literary work, as well as an integral element in all noble character. Its speciality will perhaps best be seen when we contrast it with its opposite, which is not merely a frivolous or surface way of looking at life's problems, and dealing with its interests; but also that arrogant attitude towards Institutions and great national Inheritances, as well as towards individuals, which has borne much bitter fruit in

our time. The reverence now spoken of was one of the old Hebraic virtues which Arnold so happily signalized, and it is a virtue inseparable from every character that is really great.

It is useless to assume the *rôle* of a censor, or complainant, towards the age in which one lives. The present has doubtless manifold and characteristic virtues, which posterity will be better able to appreciate than we are. But while an "increasing purpose" is running through it, and evolving results in individual and national character which we cannot as yet adequately compute, our *zeitgeist* may perhaps have some other less admirable tendencies pervading it, and the want of Reverence may be one of these. How is it, for example, that some have so little regard for that which they have politically inherited, that they would not hesitate to cut down the ladder by which they have ascended to the position they now occupy, that they would destroy Institutions which are the fruit of millions of experiments, and of the conjoint working of the twin spirits of Law and Liberty,—

> Broadening slowly down
> From precedent to precedent,

in the blind hope that *somehow* a better reconstruction will follow in the wake of their anarchic levellings? There is certainly too little reverence amongst us, both for the great national Legacies, and the great Characters of the past; very much

as its best systems and its noblest treatises are forgotten by those who have an omnivorous appetite for sensational newspapers. They are passed over in the rush of ephemeral interests, or ignored amid the trivial competitions of the hour. As a great poet put it,—

> The world is too much with us, late or soon
> Gathering and spending we lay waste our powers.

In addition to this, the fundamental error in sectarian socialism, viz. that every man is as good as every other man, and that all have therefore an equal right to everything,—which is as untrue in ethics, sociology, and politics, as it is contradicted by all historic experience,—seems to be lessening the reverence of our age, both for the great Men of the past and for the Institutions of our ancestors. It sometimes looks as if those who are the heirs of all the ages of struggle for constitutional liberty were to be subjected to a worse tyranny of the demos than Athens or Sparta ever knew. Contemporary politics are referred to only to emphasize a moral lesson which is independent of party ; and it is one of the saddest reflections to a spectator, who watches the strife of parties from outside, that amid all the achievements of the century and our progress in a thousand things, the development and discipline of character in the great virtue of reverence are so apt to be left out. We find it in the home the school the college, in scientific circles and at political gatherings, amongst the

young and the old, the rich and the poor, in the Church and in the State. The old habit of reverence (of unselfish delight in what is above us, unenvious admiration for what is greater than ourselves, the willingness to defer to the teachings of experience, and to be led by the wisdom of age) is either far less common than it used to be, or it is assuming very strange and unfamiliar phases. In this assertion no complaint is made that "the times are very evil," or that they are wholly "out of joint," but it may surely be set down as a virtue, the practice of which is much needed in our time,—and, indeed, in every age,—that the profoundest reverence should be cherished towards the wisdom of the past, and towards that which has made the present what it is. Everything else is surely worse than even "botanizing on a mother's grave." It is irreverence towards that mother herself,—the truest, noblest, and most beneficent *alma mater* in the world.

From the preceding five virtues—which are more specially individual—I pass to others which are social. Amongst them, as number *six* in the list, may be set down *the habit of generous construction or a chivalrous estimate of other people.* This was a conspicuous virtue in the Zoroastrian ethic. It has no less prominent a place in the Christian. It is surely a clear practical duty never to put an evil or sinister construction upon the deed of another person, until we have it proved to demonstration that the act *was* evil or sinister; and even then, it

should rather be accompanied by sympathetic sorrow for the offender, than by strong dislike or personal aversion. The practice of this may be partly a matter of temperament, because some persons look instinctively on the dark side of human nature, and suspect evil until good is proved; while others look on the bright side, and believe in the good until evil is proved. But the latter virtue may be cultivated, and very closely allied to it—if it be not a phase of it—is the habit of appreciating what others are doing and achieving, while we are not doing and achieving the same things, and can never expect to do so.

This virtue is radically akin to that which was placed second in the former list, viz., that of openness or candour of soul; and this will illustrate the unity of the virtues. There are some persons, however, so painfully self-engrossed, "in narrowest working shut," that they cannot see—or can with the utmost difficulty see—that the good which is being achieved by others is quite as important to the world as anything which they themselves are doing. This applies to all the professions and pursuits of mankind, and in each profession to almost all the workers in it. It is curious that it should be so inveterate a tendency in otherwise noble natures. It is a vice which grows by that on which it feeds; but it is one which may be largely counterworked and subdued. For example, take one of the great and admirable qualities in our public-school system, and in the college-life which

follows it, viz. that it gives scope for the generous recognition of the merits of others, while all are striving to excel—and if possible to out-distance others—in competitive work. To recognize, with no grudge or shadow of dislike, the somewhat humbling fact that we have been eclipsed by others, is what may be called a school or college virtue, of the first magnitude, and of the purest water. Whatever may be thought to the contrary, it is not an extinct virtue in our modern life, and it is quite possible that it may assume even finer phases as time goes on. Few things are more helpful to human progress than the ungrudged recognition of the merit and work of other people—a cordial and genial delight in their achievements; while those who rejoice in them feel that the world is so much the richer by what they themselves could never possibly have done. In this connection we may recall the words of Aprile to Paracelsus in Browning's drama,—

> let our God's praise
> Go bravely through the world at last,
> What care—through me or thee.

Closely allied to the foregoing virtue comes that of *friendship* in its highest and purest forms,—friendship developed into the habit of universal friendliness, and the constant effort to help other people. Many recognize this after a fashion, as it is one of the strongest social bonds; but the love of personal ease makes them shrink from the active offices of friendship, which demand constant sacrifice

and self-surrender if thereby others can be helped. Nay, some friendship is at its roots thoroughly selfish. There are those who wish to keep their friends to themselves. They are jealous lest *they* will lose something, if their friends get into a still closer relationship with other people. But a noble nature must acquiesce without a shadow of complaint in such a result as this. If his earliest, chiefest strongest friend becomes another's newer, chiefer, stronger friend, *what of that?* It is presumably a gain to them; and to promote, develop, and multiply all the deep relationships of life is the very essence of noble, heroic, and unselfish friendship. There is such a thing as this in the world. There are those who live for the sake of others continuously, regarding it as a far higher thing to serve than to be served; glad, if opportunity occurs, not merely of lifting the burdens which others bear, and of carrying them a little way vicariously, but also of helping those whom they do not know to clearer thoughts, truer feelings, and more fruitful action; and there is perhaps no nobler virtue in the whole category of human achievement than this habit of incessant service, when one feels that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," and reckons it a privilege to be able to brighten the lives of other people.

In connection with this virtue another may be noted, which grows up under its shadow, so to speak, and flourishes alongside of it. It is that of *indifference as to how one is treated by others* in the

course of this devotion to their interests—indifference to dislike, or even misrepresentation. The superiority which this virtue gives to one who practises it is marvellous. It creates an inner serenity of spirit. If one has large practical aims and ideals, if he is bent on adding something to the stock of human good that is in the world, what has he to do with taking umbrage or offence at the actions of other people? He has no time to think of these things, and is degraded by dwelling upon them.

There are other virtues besides these to be dealt with in Practical Ethics, but the foregoing are a sample of the rest; and a concluding remark—which has a certain reference to the whole of them—is specially relevant to student-life. It is this. Let the spirit of Chivalry be the animating spirit of the modern student, as much as it was of the mediæval soldier; and its later phases may be much finer than its earlier ones were. Never do an ungenerous or unkind thing to any of your fellows, by word, or by pen, or by deed; though others may think it clever of you to do so. Let your primary aim be to find out the good that is in others around you, to put yourselves into lines of sympathy with them, and to serve them by eliciting that good still further; for, until you do so, you cannot know how rich and wonderful a thing this human nature of ours is, which in its broken lineaments can mirror a Nature higher than itself, and in a finite way even reflect the Infinite.

IX

PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF SCOTLAND *

THE inauguration of a Society for the discussion of philosophical questions by the students of this University has a peculiar interest to those whose life-work it is to teach Philosophy at St Andrews. There have been, and still are, Societies of the same kind at Edinburgh and Glasgow; and there once was—although I am not sure that there still is—a similar one at Aberdeen. There have also been several in former years in St Andrews itself; and so—whether we may be more accurately described as meeting to inaugurate a new Society, or to re-animate an old one—we are certainly met to complete a quadrilateral of philosophically-minded student-groups, within the Universities of Scotland.

Ever since I became a Professor at St Andrews I urged the formation of such a Society here, and I

* This address was delivered at the inauguration of the second of three University Student Societies for the study of Philosophy at St Andrews, founded since 1876.

long ago suggested that it should be called the "Ferrier Society," in honour of the most distinguished philosopher who has ever taught at St Andrews, or who is likely to teach here for generations to come; but the more general title is probably a better one, and it is certainly more comprehensive. Our earlier Society did not care for the Ferrier title, and I did not afterwards propose its adoption to your predecessors.

When asked to deliver an opening address to your newly constituted Society, I thought of discussing one of the problems of the hour—and there are many such of surpassing interest—but, as you are not to meet very often, and as part of your winter programme is to hear Lectures from contemporary writers and teachers in Philosophy,* it seemed better that your inaugural address should have a more general character. I have therefore thought that it might interest those who are to become members to know something of the earlier Societies of a similar kind, which have, from time to time, been started in Scotland, and done good work in their day. I think that the Student Societies, formed for the discussion of literary philosophical and theological problems, and general intellectual converse, have done a great deal to develop academic life, and to compensate for the want of that *camaraderie*, or social fellowship, which is more directly promoted by residence in those

* Professor Royce, of Harvard University, Boston, was the next lecturer to the Society.

Colleges which are grouped together within the Universities of England.

In our own University in pre-Reformation times the custom of public speaking and oral disputation by students—both in the classes, and before the University authorities—was general; and after the Reformation it was enjoined by statute that such discussions should take place, always in the presence, and under the guidance, of the Masters or Regents. At that time the summer recess was only one of three months, from July to September; and during the recess the students met once a week, to engage as a rule in theological discussions. Some interesting information on this point will be found in M'Crie's *Life of Principal Melville*, which casts curious light on the style of discussion practised previously. We read, *e.g.* "that the disputants were exhorted to avoid the altercation usually practised in the schools, and not to bite and devour one another like dogs."

The Parliamentary Commission of 1579 drew up a plan of study for our University of St Andrews; which was chiefly the work of Andrew Melville, at that time Principal of the University of Glasgow. It was ordained that all students should attend the class of Rhetoric—which was then first added to the course of philosophical study—and "spend part of every day in composition; and, during the last half year, should declaim or pronounce an oration, once every month in Latin and Greek alternately." It was further ordained that students

of Theology "shall engage in public disputations every week, in declamations once a month; and that at three periods during the course, a solemn examination shall take place, at which every learned man shall be free to dispute." These ordinances of the Parliamentary Commission of 1579 were not suffered to remain a dead letter, but were stringently enforced, owing in large measure to the administrative rigour of the same Andrew Melville, who was transferred from Glasgow to the Principalship of St Mary's College, St Andrews. It was also largely due to the action of the first Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Robert Rollock—and by the academic work of these two men—that the foundations of a new order of things were laid, both at St Andrews and in Edinburgh.

The immediate result at St Andrews was not so much the development of a taste for classical knowledge, as a general activity and energy of mind which shewed itself in many ways; and—to the honour of St Andrews be it said—your young student-predecessors did more than the statutes enjoined. Not content with conforming to the rules for public debate within the College walls, they formed themselves into a voluntary Association for the discussion of literary and philosophical questions, which I take it was the real parent of all the subsequent Student-Societies in Scotland.

Another important thing about this earliest Students' Society was this. It was peripatetic. The members met, we are told, in the fields, and

carried on discussions in the open air; out at Magus Moor (let us suppose) or on the links toward Eden Mouth, or by the cliffs toward the Rock-and-Spindle. A MSS. volume of exercises prepared by members of this Society was discovered some time ago, by the late Principal Lee of the University of Edinburgh. They are both in Latin, and in Greek; and, amongst the contributors, is to be found the name of Milton's tutor, Mr Thomas Young.

The custom of debating in the presence of the Professors, or of defending philosophical theses in public, gradually fell into abeyance. The seventeenth century in Scotland was academically very dull. The wave of intellectual activity, which Melville and Rollock had started, spent itself; and there was no attempt to enforce the ordinances which existed. The old custom of public disputation came, like many other good things, to be "honoured more in the breach than the observance." Probably it had done its work, and it was time that it should be superseded. In the next century—the eighteenth—Student-Societies, meeting in private for the discussion of philosophical and other questions, and quite unfettered in their action, took the place of all other teaching agencies, excepting that of the Professoriate.

It must be admitted, I think, that—while St Andrews has the credit of forming what we may call the first peripatetic students' society of the sixteenth century, the University of Edinburgh has

the honour of organizing those of the eighteenth century. But it should be noted that it was for the promotion of Science that these societies were originally started. In the year 1720 one was formed at Edinburgh for the study of what was dignified by that most misleading and unhappy term "Natural Philosophy." It is true that the term may be so far justified from the fact that the students of Nature, in the eighteenth century, who investigated the laws of matter, motion, and force—sought for much more than mere facts. They doubtless went in search of *principles*, and to that extent were philosophically-minded. All the same it was a misnomer—a real abuse of words—to speak of their researches as a branch of "Philosophy."

This earliest society in Edinburgh, however, collected an excellent library, which was afterwards made over to the University of the metropolis. In 1734 a Medical Society was started in Edinburgh, which obtained a royal charter in 1779, and subsequently grew to great proportions, being a most valuable auxiliary to the extra-mural medical school. A number of smaller societies or clubs followed its institution. One was originated by Principal Robertson, another in 1754, called the Select Society—an unfortunate name—was started by the painter, Allan Ramsay, son of the poet of the same name. This Society met weekly on Friday evenings in the Advocate's Library, for literary and philosophical discussion; and its de-

bates were occasionally very able, sometimes brilliant. Dugald Stewart, in his *Account of the Life and Writings of Dr William Robertson*, says (p. 15) that in it were heard "debates which have not often been heard in modern assemblies—debates where the dignity of the speakers was not lowered by the intrigues of policy, or the intemperance of faction; and where the most splendid talents that have ever adorned the country were roused to their best exertions, by the liberal and ennobling discussions of Literature and Philosophy." Even if we deduct something from this panegyric, due to the *perfervidum ingenium* of the writer, it must have been a remarkable and "select" Society, in the best sense of the term, which numbered in its ranks such men as Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr Wedderburn (afterwards Lord Loughborough), Mr Andrew Pringle (afterwards Lord Alemoor), Lords Monboddo, Kames, Hailes, and Elibank, Charles Townsend, Sir John Dalrymple, Dr Robertson, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Ferguson the poet. Dr Carlyle of Inveresk speaks of Lords Monboddo and Elibank as the members "who had the peculiar talent of supporting their tenets by an inexhaustible fund of humour and argument." In 1759 there were 130 members in this Society.

Passing from Edinburgh to Aberdeen we find a very remarkable Society formed at the Northern University in January 1758 — one which fairly earned the title of philosophical, and which has

a special interest to us, from the fact that many of the treatises of the psychologists and metaphysicians of the north arose out of its work: the subjects on which these philosophers wrote having been first discussed by them at their Society meetings, and afterwards expanded into formal treatises. Thomas Reid, and Alexander Gerard, were two of the most important of its members; and Reid was its first secretary. It was formed for the reading of philosophical papers, and the discussion of speculative problems. The following is an extract from the rules of the Society. "The subjects of the discourses and questions shall be philosophical; all dramatical, historical, and philological discussions being conceived to be foreign to the designs of the Society. And philosophical matters are understood to comprehend every *principle* of Science, which may be deduced by just and lawful induction from the phenomena of the human mind, or of the material world; all observations or experiments that may furnish materials for such inductions; the examination of false schemes of Philosophy, and false methods of philosophizing; the subserviency of Philosophy to the Arts, the principles they borrow from it, and the means of carrying them to their perfection."

This Aberdeen Society met once a fortnight in the afternoon or evening, at one of the taverns of the town; and the arrangements which the northern philosophers made for bodily along with mental refreshment are not a little curious. "There

was an entertainment," we read, "the expense of which was not to exceed eighteenpence a head. The whole expense might be about ten shillings; of which one half was for a bottle of port, or punch, or porter, and the other half for eatables. Each meeting lasted for three hours; but free conversation was allowed for half an hour before, and half an hour after the president took the chair. This Society lasted from January 1758 to February 1773.

During its first year Reid discussed "the Philosophy of the Mind in general, and particularly the perceptions we have by sight." In 1760 he gave "an analysis of the Senses, and a discussion on Touch," and in 1762 his valedictory address as president was on "Euclid's definitions and axioms." Gerard wrote and read papers on "Genius," on the "Association of Ideas," on the "Fine Arts," on "Poetical Imagination," on the "Difference between Common Sense and Reason," and on the "Universality and Immutability of Moral Sentiment." As the Society went on the range of the subjects taken up widened, and we find that notwithstanding the restrictions of the constitutions—philological questions, bearing on Language and its origin, were discussed. The problems of Natural Theology, the methods of classifying objects, and such things as the influence of climate on human affairs, the prolongation of life, the retardation of old age, the foundation of taste in music, and even the local question of the union

of King's and Marischal Colleges, were dealt with; but by far the larger number of problems debated were psychological, and metaphysical.

Discussion turned not infrequently to the agnostic Philosophy, which had been lately introduced by David Hume; and one of the most interesting things connected with this Society is a letter which Thomas Reid wrote to Hume, in March 1763, in which he said, "your friendly adversaries, Drs Campbell and Gerard, as well as Dr Gregory, return their compliments to you respectfully. A little philosophical Society here, of which we all three are members, is much indebted to you for its entertainment. Your company would (although we are all good Christians) be more acceptable than that of Athanasius; and since we cannot have you upon the bench, you are brought oftener than any other man to the bar; accused and defended with great zeal, but without bitterness. If you write no more on Morals, Politics, or Metaphysics, I am afraid we shall be at a loss for subjects."

While the Aberdeen Philosophical Society was pursuing its unostentatious course within the University, another was formed at Edinburgh, which was destined to fulfil a more brilliant, if a more miscellaneous function amongst the kindred Societies of Scotland. This was "the Speculative Society," founded in 1764, by six undergraduates. It met once a week on the Tuesday evenings. An essay was read and criticized at each meeting,

and a debate followed, but the subjects were historical and political as well as literary. The name *Speculative* was given to it, not from the subjects discussed, but from the freedom of debate allowed to each member. The rules of the Society were admirably drawn up; one of the most important being that after an ordinary member's attendance ceased, and he had read a certain number of essays, and opened a certain number of debates, he was eligible as an extraordinary member, and could attend all meetings when convenient to him without any new duty being imposed. This rule has been followed in many other Societies; and it is excellent,* because it brings into the occasional work of the Society experienced writers and practised debaters who have left College, but who need not on that account sever their connection with it.

A characteristic feature of the Speculative Society, during the first four sessions of its existence was that what they called an *Inquiry*—rather than a formal debate—took place, at each alternate meeting. Another rule, early adopted, was to the following effect. "If any member has met with anything new or curious in the course of his reading, he may give an account thereof to the Society." But this, as you can easily see, was liable to abuse; and it was afterwards repealed.

Many distinguished "men of the time" belonged

* Especially in large centres of population, such as Edinburgh and Glasgow.

to this Speculative Society of Edinburgh. It became the fashion for all lawyers, aspiring to eminence, to join it. Amongst the philosophers who were members, Dugald Stewart was perhaps the most eminent. In 1773 he read to it an "Essay on Dreaming"; and, in an interesting note to his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, he says "The speculations concerning the human mind which I have ventured to present to the public all took their rise from the subject to which this note refers. The observations in the text were written at the age of eighteen, and formed part of the first philosophical essay which I recollect to have attempted. The same essay contained the substance of what I have introduced in Chapter III. concerning the belief accompanying conception, and the remarks stated in the third section of Chapter V. on the extent of the power which the mind has over the train of its thoughts. When I was afterwards led professionally, at the distance of many years, to resume the same studies, this short MS. was almost the only memorial which I had preserved of these favourite pursuits of my early youth; and from the views which it recalled to me insensibly arose the analysis I have since undertaken on our intellectual faculties in general."

Literature and Science, as well as History and Politics, were more frequently discussed in this Speculative Society than strictly philosophical questions; and I need say no more of its future than that it included in its ranks philosophers,

such as Sir James Mackintosh, Thomas Brown, and Sir William Hamilton; brilliant literary men, such as Sir Walter Scott and Wilson (Christopher North); and lawyers and politicians like Brougham, Francis Horner, Lord Justice Boyle, Jeffrey, and Palmerston. The Speculative was not at first exclusively, or even mainly, a "Students' Society"; and the high entrance fees latterly exacted limited it for the most part to those who had left the University, and were engaged in professional life. I may add that the essays read to it became the property of the Society; and being written on paper of a uniform size they were bound up at the end of each session. The same subject was not allowed to be re-discussed for several years. Religious questions, and those of party politics, were excluded. A valuable library, chiefly of works on history and political economy, and consisting of over 1300 volumes, belongs to the Society. It still exists, although it has no formal relation to the University, and its members need never have been students. Nevertheless the influence of this Society over many distinguished Edinburgh men who have been its members, has been great, and has often been gratefully acknowledged by them. Sir Walter Scott, Sir James Mackintosh, Francis Horner, Lord Jeffrey, and Lord Cockburn have all written of it. I may add that an elaborate history of the Society was published in 1845.

Time would fail me to give an account of all

the other Edinburgh societies. I shall only name them. The *Juridical* was founded 1773, the *Theological* in 1776, the *Royal Physical* in 1782, the *Dialectic* in 1787, the *Literary Society* (of which Sir Walter Scott was a member) in 1789-90, the *Chemical Society* in 1800, the *Academical* the *Didactic* and a new *Select Society* all in 1811, the *Scots Law Society* in 1815, the *Diagnostic* in 1816, afterwards the *Forensic*, the *Classical*, and the *Physico-Mathematical*, and the *Philomathic*. The only reason for mentioning these Societies in the present connection is that strictly philosophical questions were occasionally discussed in most of them; and, while each had its distinctive *nuance*, each and all helped to quicken the intellectual life of the students in our metropolitan University.

But a strictly *philosophical* Society was founded in Edinburgh about the year 1830, one that deserved the name of *Speculative*, much more than its august predecessor and contemporary. I wish much that the history of that society could be written. It contained within it at different times Professor Ferrier, Professor Campbell Fraser, and Principal Cairns. I am told that it did a remarkable amount of work, although it did not survive for many years; but it gave rise, by a sort of lineal succession, to the "Metaphysical and Ethical Society," which was inaugurated in the New College Edinburgh (the college of the Free Church).

That Society was the most vigorous of all the Edinburgh University ones during my student

days. It numbered amongst its members the philosophically-minded men who had been stimulated by the teaching of Sir William Hamilton, such as John Veitch, afterwards Professor at St Andrews and Glasgow, John Downes afterwards editor of the Encyclopædia Britannica, Alexander (afterwards Sheriff) Nicholson, and Professors Bruce, M'Gregor, Murray, etc., etc. The diploma of honorary membership in that Society was valued many times more than the existing Master of Arts degree. I may mention that the degree of M.A., which was conferred after no examination whatsoever, or after what was the mere mockery of an examination, had in these days sunk so low that few students could be induced to take it. None of those whom I have mentioned did so. It was the same in all the Universities of Scotland; and it was the disgraceful state into which this degree had fallen that was one of the things which most loudly called for academical reform by the Universities Commission of 1858.

I remember a student, a very excellent one of this University, telling me his experience in going into the retiring room of my class to be examined by Professor Ferrier for his degree in Philosophy, when something like the following occurred. Mr Ferrier. "Well, sir, you want to pass for your degree in Philosophy." "Yes, sir." "Then, sir, can you explain to me Adam Smith's theory of Moral Sentiment?" Thereupon the student tried, in two broken sentences, to unfold the theory of

Sympathy. He was interrupted, before he got to the end of his statement, by "Very good, Mr ——, very good; can you now tell me anything about my own theory of *Knowing and Being?*" Whereupon the youth, now greatly relieved, stammered forth a few sentences in explanation of what he had heard in the class-room. They were not finished, when the urbane and delightful Professor interposed with "Very good, Mr ——, I see you know all about it. That will do. I put you down as passed in Philosophy!"

Now these were the times of complete academic disregard for Examinations, which Scotland and the British Parliament winked at for many a day. But the University Commission of 1858, laying down definite graduation rules, raised our Scottish M.A. degree (and others) to a position of honour and importance, which they not only now possess, but which they have transcended.

In that period of decadence in the academical life of Scotland, however, the "Metaphysical and Ethical Society" did a work which was quite unique. Its diploma of Honorary Membership was only conferred on those who, after serving the Society as Secretary or Vice-President, and finally as President, had written for it six essays, and opened as many debates; and who had been associated with it first as an ordinary, and afterwards as an extraordinary member for six years. So far as I remember it was only granted to eight members in the twenty years of the Society's

existence. It may very well be valued more than an ordinary M.A. degree. In the year 1871 this Society was merged in "the Philosophical Society" of the University of Edinburgh.

More recently a Philosophical Society was established in Glasgow, but I believe that nearly twenty years previously there was an Aristotelian Society within that University. This was succeeded by the "Wittenagemote Society." These were for the discussion of strictly philosophical problems. They did not live long, but they were the precursors of the subsequent Philosophical Society of Glasgow.

I need not endeavour to trace the story of the various students' societies formed at St Andrews since the union of the Colleges in 1747, because the aim of none of them, excepting those formed within quite recent years, was to develop the study of Philosophy; although they did excellent work in different directions. I would throw out a suggestion, however, to any student desirous of filling up an as yet unoccupied niche in the literary and academic history of Scotland; viz. this, to attempt to write the History of all its University Societies. It would be a most useful literary monument; and, if well done, would be a delightful book for every future student to possess.

There is another Society to which I may refer in a paragraph, viz. the "New Speculative Society of Scotland" which was formed in the year 1870, by a number of men connected with the Univer-

sities and outside of them, for the discussion of philosophical questions. It was founded in Edinburgh, and a lengthened debate took place as to the name it should be known by. Professor Nichol of Glasgow was one of those who took a chief part along with me in its organization, and the first regular meeting of the Society was held in his house, when Professor Edward Caird read the opening paper. There were in all some eighty members enrolled; but, as it was difficult for those of us who lived at a distance to attend the monthly meetings regularly in the metropolis, I proposed that the Society should divide itself into three subsections—an Edinburgh branch, a Glasgow branch, and a St Andrews one. This was carried out; and while the meetings in Glasgow were few (owing partly to the competing interests of an "Adam Smith Society" for the study of political economy) the Edinburgh branch did good work, but the St Andrews one did by far the most. I may mention that while we had in our ranks the late Principal Tulloch and Professor Baynes, many of the papers first read to this Society were afterwards published in such magazines as *The Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary*, and the *Fortnightly Reviews*. The Society has however ceased to exist. It was not a students' society, and my only justification in alluding to it now is the kindredness of its aims to those which you have at heart, and the importance of some of the papers read to it. I may add that,

as at Aberdeen, with Dr Reid and his friends, we found it helpful to conjoin a social element, with the intellectual. We met in the afternoons. We first had the paper read, and discussed; and we dined afterwards.

I repeat that some student ought yet to write the whole "History of the University Students' Societies of Scotland." It will be a most welcome addition to the literature of a not-unimportant part of our great national inheritances.

X

THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

This subject has a philosophical root; but the stem and the branches which grow from that root are social, political, artistic, and religious, as well as philosophical.

I shall indicate a few of the causes which determine public opinion, and one or two of the effects which result or issue from it. The influences which create it are very complex, and unexpected consequences result from its inevitable pressure upon the individual units which compose each nation. But if we find out what it is that regulates the Formation of Opinion—what consolidates and diffuses it—we get to know the origin and outcome of social forces which are at times obscure, and very often illusive.

When we examine the systems of philosophical and religious belief which prevail in other lands, we see the same influences at work in the formation of Opinion as those which produce our own. We trace the stream of individual and national Evolution, at once forming and differentiating the beliefs of the world.

In discussing this subject it is wise to begin by a study of contemporary thought. It is of primary importance to ascertain and accurately appraise the forces now in operation which sway ourselves and others, to this side or to that, in the formation of belief. That is a simple question of fact; but to answer it with accuracy, we must make a careful inductive study of contemporary forces and influences.

The next thing to be ascertained is not what is now regulating, or has hitherto regulated, public opinion; but what ought to determine it. In other words, what it is wise to accept in matters of belief, and what it is prudent to reject; or, what we should follow, and what we should oppose.

In giving a short inventory of the forces and influences which seem to be in the greatest activity at present, there is first of all the inheritance we have received from our ancestors and the education which has followed—consciously or unconsciously—from that inheritance, and confirmed it. There is the early influence of our parents, our homes, our teachers, our youthful associates and friends. These forces were once very strong ones; and they continued to mould us in many ways, long after we forgot all about them and their way of influencing us, and perhaps could not even remember their existence. To the very end of the last chapter of our lives, we all remain to a large extent the victims of the past, as it is expressed in the aphorism that "blood is thicker

than water"; and so we are led unconsciously to follow opinions, which we have not ourselves formed, but have inherited in a subterranean sort of way; and which are ours, while we are ignorant of their origin or their rationality. That is a very powerful element in the formation of opinion, all the more potent perhaps, because it works unseen and unknown. Up to one-half of what each of us either believes or becomes, in the mysterious voyage of life and its innumerable conflicts, we are at the mercy of external influences operating upon us; and, while the other half of our beliefs and actions is due to what we have formed or created for ourselves, the former profoundly influences the latter.

Leaving these inherited tendencies we come to those living, contemporary forces which sway and determine the adult opinion of the world.

And there is, first of all, the influence of the contemporary Press. Under this head a prefatory statement may be made — easily understood by those who are in sympathy with a comprehensive survey of the social problems of the world—that no lover of wisdom should ever become the partisan advocate of a special political party. In the great arena of debate, including within it the work of the Press—which has become so influential an element in the formation of opinion—there are many honourable and just organs in Great Britain, enlisted on the side which happens to be to many of us politically abhorrent, viz. the policy which

would allow us to return to the old Heptarchy of England. Those who think that policy not only foolish but Utopian, may, nevertheless, have the highest admiration for many who advocate it, and for the organs of opinion which represent it. They are, perhaps, quite as necessary for the country as are those of the opposite party.

But the point to be emphasized is this. The state of public opinion throughout every country is largely due to the way in which the contemporary Press deals with the problems of the hour. We have, first of all, the reports given, in the newspapers, of speeches delivered by party leaders—whether in Parliament, or outside of it. No one can deny that a great political speech has a formative effect on the opinion of the day. The recognized leader of a party is always listened to, and every important speech which he delivers is not only reproduced, and read; it is at times slavishly deferred to. However biased it may be —however inaccurate or vague, or inept its statements or conclusion—it is, at any rate, read and pondered. Those who sympathize with it make allowance for the defects of its advocate, while they become ecstatic over his successes. A speech by a leader of opinion, by a departmental Chief, or by one who is an expert in any official sphere is invariably waited for; and, when it comes, it is received sympathetically by the party in power. It is only put aside if it is found to be really inadequate or inopportune. It may be safely

affirmed that the utterances of individual men or of responsible members of Parliament now mould the nation, and determine the trend of political opinion within it, more thoroughly than they ever did before.

Consider next the way in which the Press deals with the speeches of our public men. It is sometimes extremely difficult to know what has been actually said by the leader of a party, if one chances to take up a paper which is the organ of the opposite political side; because it would seem to commend itself to some journalists, as a wise bit of strategy, to give a partial or jaundiced report of the words and the procedure of their opponents. Thus, the initial difficulty is to know what a public man has actually said on any public matter. In this connection the statement of a dead philosopher may be remembered, "there are more false facts than false theories abroad in this world."

It is curious that so many people adopt their opinions from what is set before them in their favourite newspaper. They cannot make up their own minds on any question until they have read a "leading article" upon it; and their conviction, thus formed by what they read, may be changed by the next article they peruse; just as others are influenced by the last person they have met, and chanced to talk to. Again, different newspapers report the same speech by a representative public man in a totally different way. It is tantamount to an intentional misleading of others if a newspaper

records only a part, and not the whole, of a statement made by an opponent on an important public question. Perhaps they have not room to report the whole; but—as almost every great speech on a great subject, has necessarily many sides, and as they chronicle only one of them—the result which follows is that public opinion is misled. It is inadequately formed, because it is based on a part, and not on the whole of the facts of the case. And so it comes to this, that—apart from all commentary—different reports of the same address lead to very different kinds of belief. And when we come to the critical commentary of the Press, the bias of opponents on the one hand, and the excessive zeal of perfervid admirers on the other, results in the formation of opinions almost diametrically opposite.

Next, take into account the intentional misrepresentation which exists—hostile criticism avowedly carried on for party polemical purposes. In this no charge is made which would not be admitted by the writers referred to; for, they say, it *must* be done. It is legitimate party warfare. I consider this much more than doubtful; but the ethics of the subject are not now before us. I am merely collecting the facts of the case, trying to compute or reckon up the forces that are in operation around us: and it is one of the most notorious facts that, in our contemporary Press, there is a great deal of disparagement of real excellence, and frequent praise of emptiness and vacuity. There are floods

of senseless oratory, issuing day by day and week by week, from the Press. If our Parliamentarians are sometimes inane, our scribes are often fatuous. There are articles written by political rivals, at times by disappointed aspirants to offices which are filled by those whom the writers satirize; nay, it is well known that, in some countries, biased articles have been written in the Press by paid political agents.

We need not follow Carlyle and characterize the masses of mankind as "mostly fools." He wrote that sentence or spoke it—good man and great as he was—when suffering from a very bad attack of dyspepsia; but it may be endorsed as regards a great many reviewers of our time. Their ignorance and self-sufficiency, their occasional utter irrelevance, their presuming to estimate the worth of a volume which it has taken many years, perhaps a lifetime, to elaborate—and which they have never read—in a few scrappy sentences is appalling. If the readers of our modern Press only knew how, and by whom, many of the articles which they read are written, they would pay very little regard to them. Matters were perhaps worse in the earlier days of literary reviewing in England. I know what used to be said by the "Edinburgh" and the "Quarterly" long ago, in reference to the best authors of the time; and what was also written in scores of lesser magazines and papers. But, in this connection, I may venture to state what a venerable late editor of a Quarterly Review told

me as to his own experience in managing it. He said that one of his chief writers spoke thus (in reference to the work he had to do for smaller magazines): "How can you expect me to read the books which are sent me to review? I have very small payment for my work, and I am compelled to produce a critical estimate of an important volume within twenty-four hours of its publication, so as to be—if possible—first in the field of the reviewers. *I can not do it.* I simply read the table of contents, glance at a page or two here and there, and then — for better, for worse—*cut up* the book."

Can we wonder, while the editors of papers and magazines cater for the hour in that fashion—as so many of them do—that the result is misleading, if not injurious? They do not care for calm and judicial estimates if only they can get an early and sparkling notice, and if—as a result—their paper sells. They candidly admit that they have no time for a serious careful and dispassionate treatment, either of books or problems. They must write quickly, up to date, and according to order.

Well, what is the result of all this multitudinous criticism on public opinion? That is the question now before us. We have to consider the effect of those million articles, written day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, in haste—and with a bias or prejudice in them—on the mind of the country at large. And here we may note that the most highly educated people come under

their influence as well as the multitude. In fact, no one can escape from the intellectual contagion which is thus diffused, because it is in the very air we breathe. The malady often becomes epidemic, and the result is that the judgment of the nation is contaminated at its fountain-head. Its opinions, feelings, and sympathies are warped, twisted round about in an extraordinary manner; and so the public mind becomes the almost unconscious victim of illusions manifold.

In proportion as I honour the noble army of workers in a just and honourable Press, I despise the hirelings and the partisans, the servile men who scribble in it; and I wish that they had remained "hewers of wood and drawers of water," in less ambitious fields.

Note, then, the influence which the Press exerts, "for better, for worse." Many persons are, as already said, almost at the mercy of the newspapers. The Press has well been named "The Fourth Estate"; and it has certainly influenced the work of all who labour in the other "estates." It determines the feelings and beliefs of many, who are unaware of the power at work in and around them. And what is the result of this? It is that the opinions of mankind are influenced or sometimes formed by the most trivial things. They are shaped by forces which injure and degrade as well as by those which uplift and strengthen, *i.e.* by destructive as well as by constructive agencies.

But, leaving the Press, I come to the influence of Society on the formation of public opinion. Plato once said that Society was the great Sophist; and there is much truth in the aphorism. Consider the ignorant and prejudiced chit-chat of the day, the long-drawn-out inanities of the gossip-mongers, and the interminable drivel of talkers who bore their fellow-creatures with crudities and common-places. What is the outcome of this on the formation of opinion? However melancholy it may be, the fact remains that trivial society-talk, conversational chatter, determines many of the opinions now current in the world. It influences the feelings, if not the convictions, of the hour. We have probably all known persons who have changed their opinions, just as they change their garments, because of the prevailing fashion. They have abandoned one set of opinions, and taken up another, because it was customary to do so! I may here put a very elementary question? What is fashion? It is that which happens to surround and which tries to mould us. But I ask, what is its intrinsic value and its permanent destiny? It has nothing of either. Its use is always temporary, and it is necessarily superseded by the next turn of the wheel of fortune. There is no such thing as fixity, or abidingness, due to the influence of Reason, or high Imagination, or purified Emotion, in anything that is the mere "fashion of the hour."

Another thing, which operates banefully in the

formation of opinion by Society, is the wide if not universal adoption by it of such maxims as, "nothing succeeds like success," or "the end justifies the means," or "might is right," or "heaven helps those who help themselves." These maxims have been adopted and have become aphoristic current coin, because, like all proverbs, they have sprung from a root of truth, and are a wise embodiment of that truth. Observe, however, the effect on the formation of public opinion, if they are pushed to an extreme. If, "nothing succeeds like success," and if "the end justifies the means," and if "might makes right," then the vices of great potentates—like Napoleon I., or Queen Catharine II. of Russia, not to speak of contemporaries—are all to be ignored or condoned, simply because these potentates succeeded. Well, there have been many actors on the wide field of history who have thought so: and many of their eulogists have followed them in taking that most pernicious maxim in the list, viz. "might is right," as the very motto of their existence; but if that is to be the final word addressed to the jarring disputants of this world, we may say farewell at once to all noble progress, nay, to every high ideal. In the formation of public opinion under the influence of such maxims idealism perishes, and realism alone survives.

Another point which may be noted here is the influence of clubs and coteries, in at once socially uniting and socially isolating their members; and

therefore, in breaking up society, as much as they bind it together. There is no doubt that the influence of the many hundred clubs which exist in every large city and the tens of thousands of them which exist in every land, has been beneficial to the world, in the development of good fellowship, *camaraderie*, and many of the virtues of associated life and action. But, is it not the case that they have sometimes developed partisanship, and isolated their members from other people? Although they may have been evolved naturally and inexorably, out of the diversities of social life, it is important to note that in the formation of public opinion there is a bias at work in each of them. Nevertheless, as in the case of rival philosophies, each may counteract the successes of the other; while they all tend to differentiate public opinion.

Then, take into account the effect of the bias inherent in each of the professions. They all tell on Society in numerous ways. The soldier, the lawyer, the clergyman, the physician, and the merchant, each has his own *fach*, or specialty; which inevitably becomes by slow degrees, and as life goes on, his fetish. Thus class sympathies develop and struggle together. Within each of these professions there is rivalry, strife, and jealousy. For illustration, take only the clerical. See how at Church Congresses, at Roman Catholic gatherings, at the annual Congregational Unions, at Unitarian meetings, at Synods and Assemblies of Presbyterians, at Baptists' gatherings, etc., etc., each sect—that

is to say, every part into which the Church Catholic is cut, each with its own note of doctrine or of practice—seems to think it would be a great achievement if its particular brotherhood could conquer or absorb the rest, could extinguish opposition and bring in a millennium of decorous uniformity, in other words, if it could reduce the world to a single ecclesiastical level. I do not discuss the wisdom of the doughty champions on any of the sides, or in their multitudinous campaigns. I only try to point out the effect of what they do in the formation of public opinion. However extreme they may be, the partisan results which they promote are *facts*, with which the student of contemporary history must reckon; while their increasing number and their seeming persistence may yet become even more potent factors in the evolution of the opinion of the world.

And now before indicating what may perhaps best guide or direct the formation of opinion in the future, note another—and a very different—"sign of the times"; one which, in the later years of the nineteenth century, is profoundly interesting to all who believe in the function of Philosophy and in its future.

It is this. All the chief leaders of opinion in the world—and this is especially true of Great Britain—are increasingly influenced consciously or unconsciously by the spirit of philosophy. They all discuss the questions of the hour with an eye directed to their philosophical root, or their ante-

cedents. I need not particularize individuals; but I may say that, never in the past history of Great Britain, were the guides of opinion more influenced by philosophical ideas, and therefore, so remote from prejudice. The only thing which a lover of Philosophy desires is that the leaders in each party should recognize more fully than they often do, the value of the work which has been done, or which is being done, by their opponents. Their courtesies to one another in social life—however much they differ in policy—are well known; and this is one of the distinguishing features in the life of the great statesmen of England. It is true that some of the more partisan leaders seem at times to think that chivalrous recognition of the merits of opponents—made at a public meeting, or in an open manner—would be an act of disloyalty to their own side; and many a minor party leader has rejoiced in a printed statement which has damaged his opponents without making enquiry as to its relevancy or its justice. But I think that Great Britain compares very favourably in this respect with the line taken and the policy pursued in France, Germany, and Russia; although, perhaps, in the practice of this political chivalry, "we have not all as yet attained, neither are we already perfect."

But now, turn from the causes which hinder the formation of Opinion on honourable lines, to the things which may tend toward its development, under happier auspices in future years.

(1) Perhaps the chief ameliorating influence will come from a profounder knowledge of human nature itself. The old Socratic maxim, "know thyself," lies at the very root of all human progress, personal, social, or political. We must know ourselves before we can know anything else adequately. And in this connection all wide historical study, study which deals with the rise, decline, and fall of opinion, and the resurrection of belief the wide world over, is one of the most important. In pondering the immemorial debates of the world, we should study ancient controversies in the light of those problems which are before us now. We re-animate the discussions of the past by giving them a place in relation to the problems of the hour. I take the Socratic motto, "know thyself," as the basis of everything else worth knowing. Our late poet and philosopher, Matthew Arnold, put it thus in his *Empedocles on Etna:*

> Once read thine own breast right,
> And thou hast done with fears;
> Man gets no other light.
> Search he a thousand years.

That may be philosophically an extreme way of stating it, although it is poetically very grand; but I maintain that unless we do know ourselves, getting initiation into the true lines of thought, and the ultimate springs of human action, we are incompetent to form a just opinion on any contemporary problem.

The next thing that deserves not only mention but emphasis is this, the supreme practical value for every one who is to take part in the formation of public opinion of *Candour*, or openness of spirit; in other words, the capacity and willingness to receive influence—in what a great poet called "a wise passiveness"—from opposite points of view. If all our statesmen and all our critics would put in practice a minimum of this virtue as well as a maximum of the power of satirical invective—which some of them love so much, and in which they are occasionally rare adepts—the temporary judgments, passed on men and problems, would be much saner, in other words, more just.

There are two great forces working in the world, that of attraction and that of repulsion; in other words, the powers of sympathy, and of antipathy; of appreciation and of antagonism. We find a parallel to this in the movements of the planetary bodies. But in our little world, and in the circle of our mundane interests there is a set of forces ever at work sending us all apart, dividing us into circles, cliques, and coteries; and there are other forces drawing us magnetically together to the same centres of interest, sympathy, and pursuit. A due appreciation of these centrifugal and centripetal forces of nature, forces which operate in the intellectual, the moral, and the political world, and a knowledge of their tendencies and their uses, will certainly contribute towards a wiser formation of public opinion.

Finally, a better acquaintance with the laws of evidence, and the power of impartially weighing evidence will help towards the same result. Precipitency of judgment, before these laws are understood, and before all the facts which bear upon the problem are dispassionately weighed, is the source of innumerable errors. We all live amidst illusions manifold, and we often mistake a mirage for the solid land. But if there is one thing more than another which aids the wise formation of individual belief, and therefore the healthful construction of public opinion, it is this capacity of dealing with evidence coming to us from all quarters, and also the power of combining the shreds of evidence in a higher unity of thought; in other words, a comprehensive and constructive synthesis rather than a fragmentary and disintegrating analysis.

XI

DESIDERATA IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

In every age we need a new statement of philosophical *Credibilia* from a fresh point of view. It is absolutely certain, from the analogy of the past, as well as from the nature of the case, that we require this now. No age or generation can be satisfied with the conclusions of the past. Taught by them it may always be, and that immeasurably; but satisfied with them it cannot be. Therefore it is that fresh Philosophies must arise, that the old must give place to the new; although, as a matter of necessity, the new will very often be just the old recast, or transformed.

In its efforts to interpret existence around it, the human consciousness blossoms at certain periods, in the labours and systems of pre-eminently gifted men; men of large faculty, constructive spirit, and deep penetrative sagacity. Such times of blossoming are followed, as in the physical sphere, by periods of repose; when the attitude of the mind of the race becomes,

by reaction, one of passive contemplation and recipiency, rather than of creative effort and attempt at system-making. This period of intellectual lull or repose is usually succeeded by a time of new and active insight; one in which tradition and precedent become wearisome, and a fresh creation is demanded.

A primary philosophical desideratum of our time is a new Classification of the Sciences. Since Philosophy sits behind the sciences, and deals with questions which underlie them, it is one of its special functions to classify the sciences; and we now need a readjustment of all the provinces of knowledge from the point of view to which modern Philosophy conducts us. If we attempt to readjust the territorial boundaries of knowledge from a scientific point of view—that is to say, from the station on which any of the individual sciences places us—the likelihood is that it will be done in a one-sided manner. We must go beyond the separate and special sciences to reach the guiding principle which will explain, and enable us to arrange the whole of them. Of course the agnostic, who ignores the realm of metaphysic, will classify the phenomena of the Universe in a very different way from that in which the idealist classifies them. Plato's arrangement was unlike that of Aristotle; Bacon's classification was different from that of Leibnitz; Comte's adjustment unlike that of Cousin; and Kant's and Schelling's quite different form that of Spencer. The most important thing to note how-

ever in my judgment is this. All the best classifications of the sciences have come, not from the discoverers in Science, or from our scientific authorities, but from the great philosophers of the world.

I give you a roughly drawn chart to begin with, and you will see how large the questions are which it opens up. Suppose we make our fundamental contrast the phenomena of Mind and the phenomena of Matter. Starting from the ideal or metaphysical point of view, we must exclude from the circle of the Sciences, and reserve for the sphere of Philosophy, all enquiries as to the ultimate essence of mind and of matter, and as to the meaning of the one underlying substrate of the Universe. We therefore exclude Theology. Theology is not a science, except indirectly. There is a science of Religion, that is to say of the phenomena of the human mind in their relation to the Divine; but we cannot, by any possibility, have a science of the divine Mind.

Keeping then, first, to the phenomena of Mind, and secondly to the phenomena of Matter, we may classify as follows :—

(A) Sciences dealing less or more with the phenomena of Mind—(1) Psychology, (2) Logic, (3) Ethics, (4) Æsthetics, (5) Sociology, (6) Jurisprudence, (7) Political Economy, (8) Comparative Philology, (9) Comparative Religion, (10) History.

Many of these might be divided into subsections, and some of them such as the science of Language

(Comparative Philology) and that of History lie intermediate between the two spheres indicated; because they are not exactly sciences of mind, nor certainly are they material sciences. In the same way the first group in the second section, *i.e.* the Mathematical sciences, partake of an intermediate character, and form a link of connection between the mental and the material spheres. But to pass at once to the second section.

(B) There is (1) the Mathematical sciences, with their many sub-divisions, dealing with the relations of number and space, the quantitative relations of things; (2) experimental Physics, dealing with the laws of matter and motion, with its numerous sub-sections — Statics, Dynamics, the phenomena of Heat, Light, Electricity, Magnetism, etc.; (3) Chemistry; (4) Biology, with its subsections Botany and Zoology; (5) Anatomy; (6) Physiology, the margin line between it and Zoology being a peculiar one; (7) Geology; (8) Astronomy.

Some of the sciences named may seem to overlap each other, and some to retreat into others; while, from a philosophical point of view, all the problems of all the sciences meet at a common focus. Our modern knowledge is becoming so intricately sub-divided, modern culture increasingly complex, that we are very seldom able to ascend to an intellectual observatory, and there map out the separate constellations shining in the firmament of knowledge. It seems to me, however, that while a new classification and sub-division of the sciences is

one of the *desiderata* of the immediate future of British Philosophy, it can only be effectively carried out by one who occupies a position outside the sciences themselves. A knowledge of the sciences in detail is necessary before the classification can be adequately done, and a scientific specialist may be the best person to do it; but, whoever does it, it is by Philosophy alone that it can be accomplished; because it is not a scientific question at all. It is strictly a philosophical problem, a recasting of the way in which we interpret the inner and final element of knowledge which transcends the sciences. In every age there is a fresh necessity for this.*

II.—Next, we must re-interpret the ultimate principle of Existence. We must continually recast our doctrine of Substance, Essence, and Cause. No past theoretical explanation—be it Eleatic, Heraclitic, Platonic, Aristotelian, or any other, can exhaust the possible ways in which Substance, Essence and Cause may reveal themselves. Hence all the varying metaphysical theories, which, one after another, have come to the front in the course of the ages.

The most perfect statement of the ideal theory, which the world received in ancient times was that of Plato; but Plato's idealism did not satisfy the ages. It exhausted itself, and was naturally and necessarily superseded by the experientialism of

* In my *Essays on Philosophy, Old and New*, I have dealt with this problem in a somewhat different manner.

Aristotle, and when it reappeared in the Neo-Platonic School at Alexandria it assumed new phases. It survived in the theology of St Augustine, and was seen again at Florence under Ficinus, subsequently assuming all the hundred kaleidoscopic phases of modern idealism, but changed in each of the schools both by the additions it received and the subtraction it experienced.

III.—Another desideratum is the recasting or fresh appraisal of the Philosophy of the Beautiful. It is remarkable that, with all our advances in recent years in British Art, with our noble growth of modern Poetry, our magnificent Music, and our great English school of water-colour landscape—backed by the direct and indirect artistic teaching of Mr Ruskin on the subject—our Philosophy of Beauty should be just where it was in the last generation, nay, almost in the eighteenth century.

Now the ultimate essence of the Beautiful must be re-analyzed by us. The question of what Beauty is in itself must be discussed, and the relation in which all individually beautiful things stand to be ultimately and absolutely Beautiful, must be cleared up. There is a beauty in poetry, in music, in art, in human life, as well as in external nature. The central feature of a great landscape picture by Turner, the main characteristic of a sonata of Beethoven or Brahms, and the prevailing feature of any one of the great poems of the world, from Homer to Tennyson, may seem to be very

different; and, of course, the manifestations of the Beautiful vary indefinitely in all its provinces and subsections, but the thing itself is the same in all. It seems to me that this has to be exhibited afresh, and to be drawn out conclusively in detail. It is one of the most interesting fields for the speculative philosopher to traverse, hile his determination of the ultimate canons of the Beautiful will be found to help him in his speculative enquiries within other allied provinces.*

IV.—A fourth desideratum is the working out of the co-relation of the three provinces of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. This classification is one which we inherit from Plato, but Victor Cousin shewed a wonderful intuitive sagacity in reference to it; and in his lectures published under the title of "The True, the Beautiful, and the Good," he has done much to bring out the salient points in the great harmony he insisted on. I do not propose to follow him now. I only wish, in trying to point out the correlation of the three provinces, to shew how the mere ontologist is baffled before the mystery of things, when he perceives the arcana that surround him, and finds that he cannot proceed towards the shrine of the Universe by the avenue of pure thought alone. When his logic breaks down, and even his intellectual intuition of the infinite is pale and spectral, it is then that the poet comes to his aid, with his

* I have discussed this question, at some length, in my *Philosophy of the Beautiful* (vol. II.), "University Extension Manuals."

vivid glance into the mystic meaning of the cosmos, and his interpretation of its higher harmonies. Not only so. Not only is the metaphysician helped by the poet, but the theologian is helped by both of them, in his interpretation of the ultimate principle of the Universe; while the metaphysician, or the poet, who sets the theologian aside, has an equally partial and imperfect view of the Universe as a whole. When the metaphysician becomes a poet and a theologian, when the theologian looks with the eye of the poet and the metaphysician, and when the poet looks through both a speculative and a religious lens, then the view which each takes of the Universe at large meets at a common focus, which is a luminous one.

V.—The fifth desideratum which I shall mention has been more thoroughly understood than any of the previous ones, and much has been already done in the way of supplying it. It is the treatment of all philosophical problems *historically*, so as to bring out the relation between the systems that have been constructed by the individual reason and the general mind of the race—or that universal reason of which they are, after all, only the most vivid illustrations. The study of the great problems historically shews us the causes that have led to their origin. It explains their rise and their fall. It exhibits their evolution out of previous systems, and their occasional progress by antagonism and reaction. It gives a key to their vitality, their reappearance after decay, their resurrection from

the dead; and it also shews why, in reappearing, they assume new phases. The law of the hereditary transmission of qualities applies to systems of opinion, as well as to characters and physiognomies; and this historical method of study shews us further that the origin of every great speculative system is to be traced back not merely to intellectual causes, but to many others working alongside of the reasoning power of their founders.

Our mental attitude towards a doctrine which is an evolution out of the distant past, and therefore only a passing phase of the universal constructive reason of the race, is very different from what it would be towards a doctrine which was the creation —perhaps the crotchet—of an individual mind. One result of this way of looking at systems of philosophy ought to be the development of a larger tolerance, tolerance for opinions with which one may have little personal knowledge, and perhaps less appreciation. We learn that the opinions which are not ours may nevertheless belong to what I have just called the universal reason of the human race; that gigantic errors may be only simple truths abused; and therefore that the most extravagant of them are not to be spurned by us, but rather to be so studied, that posterity may extract wisdom out of their erratic or eccentric phases.

The last point in the present discussion—although it is by no means the last desideratum in contemporary Philosophy—is the determination of the *social*

bearings of the greater problems; their bearing, that is to say, both on individual character and national life. In this we have a sort of minor test of the worth of all the great systems. A Philosophy which has no relation to life, but stands apart from it, like a set of mathematical formulæ, is almost self-condemned; and here you may note that the Philosophy which tells most powerfully on human life is one in which reason and emotion unite, in which poetic intuition and rational insight go hand in hand. One reason why metaphysical speculations are so little esteemed by the masses is that they are so often elaborated in solitude, by recluse students who never think of their bearing on life and practice; but Philosophy lies much closer to practice, than the sciences do.

I am the more anxious to lay stress on this because of the common delusion that the higher Philosophy, from its being called speculative—and it obtains that title merely because its students look as from a watch-tower over the firmament of knowledge, and traverse its areas from centre to circumference by the telescope of thought—is necessarily unpractical. It is a crude popular fallacy that the speculative and the practical are opposed. The very highest Philosophy, which concerns itself with the Infinite and Absolute, is necessarily practical; because we only know the Infinite through the finite, at the same time that we know it as transcending the finite; while it is in the depths of the human consciousness—and in the very arcana of that

consciousness—that we have the fullest disclosure of the Infinite. The Infinite is there manifested not extensively, but intensively; that is to say it is revealed in the depths of personality, and this makes a true Philosophy of the Infinite the most practical of all the sections of human knowledge, connecting it directly with Religion.

Further, there are the higher ethical questions which concern individual duty, and the relation of unit to unit in the social organism; these have to be wrought out afresh in the philosophy of the future. Our Ethics must be allied to our Sociology as well as to our Religion. The relation in which the individual stands to his fellows not as a mere branch or leaf of the tree of social existence—and therefore detachable from it as a fragment—but as a part of that larger whole, which is at the same time his own higher self "writ large" on the field of humanity; so that any injury done to others is at the same time a wrong done to self, a hurt and impoverishment of one's own personality; all this has I believe to be yet developed much more fully.

These desiderata as to what may be needed in the immediate future are thrown out as suggestions, which may be of some use to contemporary students of Philosophy, who are now drawn towards it by the same magnetic spell which has led their predecessors in the same direction. One does not need to assume the *rôle* of the prophet in affirming that Philosophy will continue to fascinate the

generations of the future, that "the coming race" will not find a substitute for it in agnosticism; but that it will remain the friendly ally both of the highest Science and the deepest Religion, and that these will continue, as Tennyson expresses it in reference to "the True, the Beautiful, and the Good,"—

> three sisters
> That doat upon each other, friends to man,
> Living together under the same roof,
> And never can be sundered without tears.

XII

THE ETHICS OF CRITICISM*

THE necessity of Criticism is almost too obvious to be stated.

Imagine a political party in office uncriticized, a Ministry without an Opposition, a flood of literature sweeping the country without any review of its merits or demerits; imagine a state of Society in which there were no rules of conduct, or canons of taste or principles of evidence, and no adequate criticism of these; suppose a single all-dominant Church, without a rival sect, either to oppose it or to do it justice; in such circumstances this fair world of ours would be uninhabitable. It would either collapse, or drift into the lethargy that precedes decay.

Those differences which exist in human Nature, underlying its unity, necessitate the existence of opposite parties in the State; and the one which

* This subject was discussed by me, from a different point of view, in two articles in *The Nineteenth Century*, respectively entitled "Criticism as Trade," and "Criticism as Theft." I have intended to follow these by a third, entitled "Criticism as Murder," but it is meanwhile postponed. I discussed the same subject to a certain extent in a late periodical, *The Scots Magazine*.

happens to be temporarily in power could not be trusted to do its best work—and to do it thoroughly —were it not criticized and opposed. These two, the criticism and the opposition, bring out the best that it is doing, and is capable of; much more than appreciative praise could ever bring it out. If the worst thing that could happen to a youth is to be reared in a home where he is pampered, and nearly the worst that could befall an author is to be greeted with premature applause, the chief evil that could overtake any political party is to be left to itself, deprived of the steadying influence of criticism, and the guidance of an Opposition.

But all criticism is not alike beneficial. When it is destructive, it is usually sterile of result. On the other hand, a constructive estimate as a rule initiates new results. The former may be extremely brilliant, but it does not create, and it is seldom even ameliorative. Like the surgeon's knife, it is an instrument to be used to remove what is obnoxious, and possibly perilous to life, and growth; but it never gives rise to fresh developments. True criticism does not enter, either into Literature or Politics, Philosophy and Art or Life, to destroy. It is meant to subserve the higher function of fulfilment; guarding what is excellent in the Republic of Letters, and in the Body Politic, and rejecting only what is alien to the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.

I think it may safely be said that, in whatsoever sphere they work, all just men welcome honest

criticism, even in proportion to its severity, if it be justly administered. They may wince under it for the moment; but they feel no chagrin, and they soon recover from any annoyance it caused. Most of them are able, in the long run, to thank their critics for the work they did, and the excellent stimulus it gave them. There is scarcely a limit to the service which just criticism performs towards the well-being of us all, of individuals and communities alike; and the keener, and more dexterously incisive it is, the greater the service done, if only it be just. Criticism is of no use, unless it be trenchant; and if its arrows are not barbed, the wounds they cause are salutary, and soon healed. *Per contra*, perhaps, the weakest of all literary or political writers is the man who is always complimentary, and is therefore sure to be commonplace to the core.

But, while reiterated and effusive praise is more than weak—it is offensive to every honest mind and heart—the savage criticism of a coterie, or a self-constituted clique, is a most injurious and repellent element both in Literature and Politics. If the *suppressio veri* and the *suggestio falsi* do immeasurable harm in the literary field, the imputation of base motives in the political arena, is a still greater degradation to those who resort to such procedure. It is not "the noble army" of writers and speakers, however, who thus transgress. They may occasionally say severely bitter (and perhaps unjust) things of their contemporaries;

but it is the lesser scribes, and the lower critics—the mercenaries of their profession — who are blameworthy, and who should *me judice* be put into a pillory of exposure, since they are undoubted literary criminals.

Every reader of the daily papers knows that there is a style of political criticism which demoralizes party conflicts, killing out the old chivalry, and even poisoning the well-springs of national life. I do not raise the question whether, in this respect, we are worse than our predecessors; nor do I mean that, in an ideal state of matters, the keenness of party controversy should cease. It would be no political elysium were those who sit in opposition to the Ministry of the day,—whose function it is to watch every measure introduced, and be the severest censors of its weak points—to give us rose-water speeches, instead of robust incisive criticism, where even the sting of satire has its use. The Opposition must be vigilant, fearless, nay it must be lynx-eyed in reference to trifles, *fastidious* even in its criticism of the party in power, resourceful in its tactics, and not afraid of being for a time in the minority. But why should it be unscrupulous in its charges, tumultuous in its passion, and irritable like a boy in unjust invective?

It should never be so; and I therefore ask again, Why should partizanship sink to such a level that not only the leader-writer in the provinces—who praises the speeches of his chief

mainly because they are his—but the metropolitan critic as well, who often offends as much as his provincial brother, start with the presupposition that no good thing can come out of the precincts of the rival camp? The presupposition with which all partizans begin—whether the organizers or the critics, the leaders or their lieutenants—is that the policy of the Ministry must be a bad policy; that no proposals tending in the right direction can emanate from it; or that, if they do, their merits must be overlooked, their excellences obscured, and the measures themselves opposed. Not only so, but we are sometimes told that the motives, as well as the policy, of the Ministry are altogether bad, and that it is better for the country that there should be no legislation at all, than good legislation initiated by the party in power; because the credit of carrying one good measure will give popularity and strength to an Administration that is unworthy of the confidence of the country.

There are even some extremists who do not scruple to say that no legislation can be good for the country unless it originates with the most advanced section of their special party. Its goodness consists, not so much in what it is, as in the quarter whence it comes. They forget—at least for the time they forget—that every legislative measure has, and must have, its weak side; that the one they would have devised, had they been in power, would have been justly open to the criticism that it was incomplete; and that, if the

passing of remedial measures (relatively wise and good) is to be postponed until the Opposition happens to be again in power, constructive legislation might be set aside for ever. Since no party can ever have a monopoly of wisdom, if the Ministry of the day is thwarted in the passing of its measures by factious partizanship, reprisals are sure to follow when the swing of the political pendulum sends those in power into the shade of Opposition.

What one complains of is that no sooner does a Cabinet agree upon a policy, or its leader issue a manifesto, or make a speech disclosing a legislative programme, than the chiefs of the Opposition, as well as their satellites, find their function—if not the very justification of their existence—in pulling it to pieces, and if possible scarifying its authors; being not only suspicious of their wisdom, but doubtful of their motives. No one can object to the keenest critical estimate of a rival party, and its programme. That is the very life of the political struggle; but no less excellent, and equally necessary in the long run, is an appreciation of the good that is being done by the Opposition. Why should that be an extinct virtue? We need not expect *absolute* dispassionateness; but, is it Utopian to urge, and to hope for, the practice of the old virtues of fairness and political chivalry? In the heat of party warfare men are not swayed by reason. They are led on, as in civil war, by the impulse of passion: and there is a good deal to justify the fear that we are in one of those heated

political periods—of which the most notable in modern times was that which preceded the French Revolution—when fanaticism, and the blind worship of a fetish, for a time overpower the calmer judgments of reason. On the other hand, there are signs which warrant the hope that a fairer spirit may emerge out of this chaos, and that many are growing tired of partizanship.

It is by its conduct while in Opposition, that the highest virtues of a party are seen; and its future victory will be assured, if its recognition of what is good in the measures of those in power is as explicit, as its criticism of the defects of their measures is incisive and keen. Might not the masses in our country—to whom so much power is now entrusted—be educated to see that, as two great Parties are necessary for the well-being of every Nation, neither can possess a monopoly of wisdom; and that therefore neither of them ought to have a very long-continued lease of power? In the retrospect of every period it is seen that political wisdom has been pretty equally divided between the contending parties, and it is for this reason that power should pass alternately from side to side.

At any rate, we may ask, is it necessary for the present political struggle—for success in the work of dethroning Ministries, and bringing others into temporary power—that motives, as well as policy, should be constantly challenged? that measures should be caricatured, rather than appraised? and that so soon as a party is deprived

of a seat or two, the opposition should try to prove that the tide has turned again in its favour? It would surely strengthen the State, and make the people happier—while it would raise the tone of social life in the country—if a loftier courtesy were introduced into political strife, and if something of the ancient chivalry towards opponents mingled with, and even animated, the fray.

Coming to a few details. The world's debt to its nobler Critical Reviews is a very great one. The Magazines have been the channels through which many of our literary masterpieces have first seen the light. But there are now-a-days far too many Magazines and Reviews in circulation. Their name is legion, and their character occasionally nondescript. There are more than six hundred in Great Britain, and more than eight hundred I am told in America; I cannot tell how many on the Continent of Europe, or in our Colonies. Of course, in this as in other things, the demand has caused, and regulated the supply. The vast increase, and development of our primary and secondary Education, the thousands of schools where in last century there were tens, the myriads of newspapers where there used to be hundreds, the increase of cheap books and free libraries, and the consequently easy perusal of light literature by the half-educated masses, has led many to begin to write, who, a quarter of a century ago, would never have put pen to paper; and so, we have far too many authors and authoresses. Our modern educa-

tion—the much glorified product of the nineteenth century—has been such that almost every one can now produce a novel, every man can make a speech or keep a journal, and every woman write poetry. As a necessary consequence there is an entire regiment of miscellaneous scribes ready to criticize the authors and the speech-makers. Early in life these writers are trained up to a certain level, on which they can come forth as penmen, and they find a ready market for their wares. There are so many magazines waiting for the services of those who can turn out "views and reviews" rapidly on demand, especially if they can write up to the standard of cleverness in vogue, that there are scores of competitors waiting for employment; far more candidates than there are offices to fill.

In this connection I think I may also say that there are too many publishers now-a-days, each of the newcomers ready to issue "the book of the hour"—*i.e.* the book that will bring in the largest return in the way of profit, apart from merit or enduring fame.

You may remember that, in one of the best of his later poems, Tennyson said :

> But seldom comes the Poet here
> And the Critic's rarer still.

As a humble member of the literary brotherhood, I entirely concur in that verdict. And may I add Wordsworth's opinion given in 1824? In that year he wrote, "Some will say 'Did you ever know a

poet who would agree with his critic, when he was finding fault?' I will ask, 'Did you ever know a critic who suspected it to be possible that he himself might be in the wrong?'" I think that the true, high-toned, sympathetic critic is rarer than the creative poet, for this reason; that accurate analytic power is not so common a possession as is that of facile production. Nevertheless, I put both of these powers and tendencies—to avoid a psychological quarrel—on an equal level of merit and value to the human race.

Trying to reach the underlying philosophy of the subject, perhaps it comes very much to this. There are two great social forces working in the world, viz. that of attraction and that of repulsion; in other words, sympathy and antipathy, a forward movement and a backward impulse, or a progressive and a regressive tendency. We find a parallel to this—which rules the world of humanity—in the motions of the planetary bodies. In solar physics, attraction and repulsion combine to produce the harmony of the spheres. But, in our little world, and in the circle of our mundane interests, there are forces continually at work which drive us apart; dividing us up into those circles, sets, cliques, and coteries, to which we respectively belong. There are other forces which draw us magnetically together, tending to a common centre of sympathy and pursuit. These centrifugal and centripetal tendencies—which operate with invariable constancy in the physical sphere—have their

analogues in the world of humanity; and the parallel is a very close one.

Before leaving this part of the subject, I retrace my steps, to speak in praise of a noble Press—and I think that in our country it has done great things—as an educator of the masses. None but fools can bring a "railing accusation" against the Press as a whole; and those who do so, make daily use of what they despise. The services it has rendered in the diffusion of knowledge, in the development of faculty, nay in the education of character, have been vast. Without our Press our country might at this hour have been half barbaric. It has been a powerful means, and will be an increasingly powerful one, of diffusing culture and sending out new knowledge to the very ends of the earth. All the more need, however, that the masses should be trained carefully to weigh its tendencies, and accurately to test its influence. What those who have been hitherto helped by it need to know is how to use it wisely, to sift the materials it brings together in a miscellaneous manner; in other words, to distinguish what is substantial and enduring from the tinsel of mere appearance. If the masses only knew what to read and what to ignore, what to value and what to put aside, everything would for them be changed.

I come back to the critic's true function, or mission, his special province and work in the world. If we go to the root of things, it may be said to be (1) to try to get at, and to shew the

ultimate *raison d'être* of all that is, assigning it its proper place in the scale of existence. (2) Since everything in the world is related to every other thing, and it is impossible to isolate anything successfully, to weigh each of them impartially, testing its intrinsic value. (3) Since all things are "double one against another," to perceive, and to bring out the fact that we cannot understand anything without an appreciation of its opposite. (4) To shew that the value of what is being done by any individual thinker, or practical worker, or social reformer, is to be measured not only by the extent to which he happens to mould contemporary opinion, but also by the way in which he rises above the verdict of the hour, and anticipates the future; creating history by laying hold of the intrinsic reality of things, apprehending their *principia*, if not their *ultimata*. Now, it may be thought, and said, that these things are hard to reach, and still harder to retain. Be it so. That does not make them inapplicable, or untrue χάλεπά τὰ καλά. The true critic does not live on the surface of things, or rest contented with a glance at the externals of a problem, a character, or a policy; and he invariably begins (as I have tried to shew), not with clever satire or dispraise, but with appreciation. Were he to start with the idea that his chief function was that of the anatomist or surgeon, —to dissect and remove, rather than to heal and to build up—he would fail *ab initio*. But alas! the destructive spirit is almost invariably abroad work-

ing havoc, so soon as the constructive one appears; and so, almost every new scheme or policy, if it be original and great, is disesteemed at first. Many of the very best books ever written have—as Hume tells us was the fate of his great *Treatise*—fallen "still-born from the press," and have had a very slow resurrection from that early death. In addition to this history shews us that no great work of Art has ever been adequately appreciated on its first appearance, and that nearly every great poem has been launched upon the world, without the sympathy of the average reader and critic.

The reason is obvious. A writer, starting from the level of the commonplace — following conventional rules, and adopting the standards he finds current around him—must of necessity fail to appreciate what is original if it be novel. On the other hand, the former canons of opinion and rules of art are displaced, if not set aside, by the original mind that has anything fresh to announce. Here, as in other cases, it is found that the new wine of genius bursts the old bottles of tradition.

Nevertheless the verdict of time is always just. As Tennyson wrote

> What is true in time will tell.

And it is not curious that it should be disesteemed at first, and forgotten for a time. That is the destiny of everything that is to live; and so we see many works, advertised by booksellers for a time amongst their "remainder lots," become the cherished

possessions of the future. "*Magna est veritas et prevalebit*," although for the moment it might seem to be truer to say, "*Magna est mendacitas et triumphavit.*" But no. Human nature is sound at the core, and the verdict of the general mind of the race is ultimately on the side of genuine merit of every kind.

In a previous paper I referred to the reviewers of books who never read them. But this is not confined to literary criticism; and I give other similar instances. One of the distinguished R.A.'s of our time told me of an art-critic who had agreed to review the pictures in a particular Academy. He had to go suddenly to Paris, and could not possibly see the Exhibition; but, he had to produce a review of it. So he asked a friend to send him a catalogue, and to write on it such phrases as "this is a daub," "that a success," "this an improvement," this other "lacks atmosphere," the fifth "has no colour," the sixth is "sketchy" and "a failure," and so on and so on. The art-critic, receiving his marked catalogue, at once wrote his review for pay!

Another case. A critic of painting—scribe of the scribes—ventured to compose an article, made up of his jottings when visiting the private studios of the leading artists who were expected to contribute pictures—praising this and condemning that—but, when the Exhibition opened, not one half of the pictures thus glibly criticized were hung on the walls! Similarly, or worse, a musical critic

undertook to write an article on an advertised concert. After reading through the programme, he composed a hypothetical notice. When the concert took place, the programme was altered, but the notice of what had been originally advertised, although never performed, was published in full by the newspaper in question.

Note another thing. So soon as a great man dies, the eagles of criticism swoop down upon him. Trivial details of his life are chronicled; and the biographical pilot-balloonists anticipate the rightful biographer. The mere newsmonger, who sets in order telegraphic notes and telephonic scraps of information, and who supplies it at the earliest possible moment, is honoured and rewarded. If the supreme ambition of editor or publisher is to be *first in the field*, the inevitable result must be imperfect work, inaccurate detail, scrappy products, desultory fragments, and a great deal of miscellaneous and most foolish gossip.

And then there is that terrible creature, the professional interviewer, who comes with pencil and notebook, and holding a sort of literary kodak in your face, asks your opinion of many things, to reproduce them after his own or her own fashion in the newspapers. They are amongst the greatest of modern nuisances. It is said that Napoleon was once plagued by an interviewer; and getting rid of him, some one asked, "How did you manage it?" "Oh!" said the emperor, "I shot him."

I said before that there were far too many books,

and reviews of books, in our time; too many tradesmen in knowledge, the purveyors of indigestible literary food. It was an old saying, which has come down to us from the time of the exile in Babylon, "Of the making of books there is no end;" nor observe is there an end to their *unmaking*, their rapid disappearance; because the one thing involves the other. The trivial "book of the hour" must of course disappear. It cannot live, and it is well that it should die. But take the case of a really good book. No sooner is it written and circulated than it encounters hostile as well as appreciative criticism. If it is a joy to some, it is envied by others. It stirs up the ambition of aspirant authors and rival publishers, to eclipse it, to outdo its success by a similar venture. Every new "Series" of Books is imitated by a rival one, almost as soon as it is started. Not content with seeing a bit of good work done, by one author, editor, and publisher,—leaving it alone, and endeavouring to make a fresh departure along a different track—the competing author, editor, and publisher, devoid of all originality or imagination, merely try to eclipse the success previously made, along its own line. How foolish of them! Are there no new possibilities in human nature? No fresh pathways both for original and for critical work?

But, as already said, I am sceptical of the wisdom of increasing the number of new magazines, even when they are issued by our best publishing

houses. Of course when old ones die out, and are—in the nature of things—superannuated, others must take their place, and they will doubtless be evolved on lines of their own. But perhaps we would have a richer Literature, with more originality and greater depth, if we had fewer of these dissipating periodicals.

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